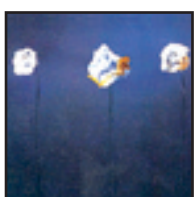


An unusual roll of toilet paper intentionally inhibits easy thus wasteful rolling and use. **Page 11**



Eat, drink and be merry with our complete Christmas guide. **Page 13 - 16**



"The best way to feel love for these orphans is to put yourself in their shoes." **Page 9**



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SARS Watch

By Wang Xiaoxiao

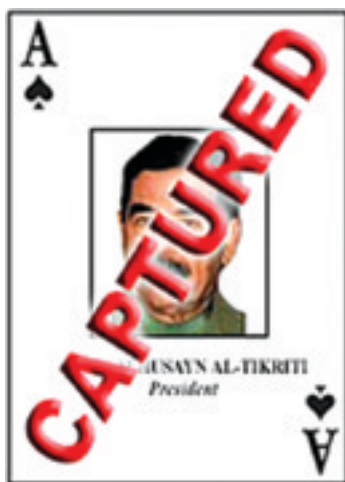
The Beijing Center for Disease Prevention and Control has begun thoroughly inspecting all information related to SARS (severe acute respiratory syndrome) since Taiwan reported its first SARS case on Wednesday this week. The Center will also keep close watch on the situations of Hong Kong and other Southeast Asian areas.

As both the SARS case in Singapore in early September and the recent Taiwan case resulted from a virus leak during research, the Ministry of Health emphasized in a circular issued yesterday that all SARS viruses and infected human specimens must be kept under strict control to ensure the safety of research labs and personnel. In addition, medical units are required to report to relevant authorities and obtain prior approval before conducting any research on the disease. Labs keeping either viruses or specimens must adhere to strict safety regulations.

The Beijing Entry-Exit Inspection and Quarantine Bureau has beefed up passenger inspection for Beijing, focusing on visitors from Singapore, Hong Kong and Taiwan, according to the Ministry of Health. The infrared Fever Sensing System to test body temperature has been reinstituted, with anyone measuring above 38 °C quarantined in the fever clinic of assigned hospitals.

Jin Dapeng, director of the Beijing Bureau of Health, announced in Wednesday's emergency meeting that all hospitals must pay special attention to patients with fever, particularly those from destinations of Taiwan and Singapore.

Beijing's Capital International Airport has already opened a special processing channel for passengers from Hong Kong and Macao, including separate and disinfected landing gates for planes from those two destinations.



Saddam's Fate Hangs in Question

Saddam Hussein deserves the "ultimate penalty" for his crimes, said US President Bush on Tuesday. This again puts the United States sharply at odds with Europe and the United Nations who both adamantly oppose the death penalty.

"This is a disgusting tyrant who deserves justice, the ultimate justice," said Bush in his interview with ABC News' Diane Sawyer. US Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld said Tuesday that the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) will head up interrogation of the captured former Iraqi president Saddam Hussein.

Saddam, who has been on the run since his regime was overthrown on April 9, was captured alive Saturday evening near his hometown Tikrit in northern Iraq. The capture of Saddam Hussein has raised American approval ratings for their president from 52% to 58%, according to the latest polls published on Wednesday.

Asked about the capture of former Iraqi President Saddam Hussein, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Liu Jianchao said Sunday that China hopes the incident can be conducive to peace and stability in Iraq.

"We hope that the latest development of situation in Iraq is conducive to the Iraqi people taking their destiny into their own hands, to realize peace and stability in Iraq," Liu said.

When Saddam was in power, the Iraqi people suffered from several wars as well as trade sanctions for many years, the spokesman added.

Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Yuri Fedotov, whose country opposed the war, said Tuesday that only Iraqis could decide Saddam's fate. U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan noted that the world body did not support bringing Saddam before a tribunal that might sentence him to death. But Australia's Prime Minister John Howard, who sent troops to fight in Iraq, said he would support the death penalty for Saddam, "If it were imposed, absolutely," he said.

Countries around the Middle East lined up on Wednesday to sue Saddam Hussein, for crimes he allegedly committed against them while he was leader of Iraq. Iran announced it was preparing a criminal complaint for any international court that might try Saddam, over the 1980-88 Iran-Iraq war which caused over 300,000 Iranian casualties, many in chemical weapons attacks.

British Prime Minister Tony Blair said Tuesday that he hoped the capture of Saddam might shed more light on his weapons program. Blair maintained he was still confident that the US-led Iraqi Survey Group (ISG) would find out what happened to Iraq's alleged weapons of mass destruction (WMD), the major justification of the US-led war against Iraq. However, the former United Nations chief weapons inspector, Hans Blix, said on Monday that the capture of Saddam will not help in tracking down WMD in Iraq. (Xinhua)



A haggard Saddam Hussein shown shortly after his capture.

Xinhua Photo

Pekingman Caves Safe

By Ji Runju

Contrary to recent reports of the imminent collapse of the Pekingman Caves at Zhoukoudian, Mr. Du, Deputy Manager of the Beijing Office of UNESCO told *Beijing Today* that in fact Zhoukoudian will not be removed from the Human Heritage of the World site list. The Caves have been included in the list since 1987, at the 11th session of UNESCO.

According to Mr. Du, additional rumors that Zhoukoudian may be taken off UNESCO's World Heritage Site are also groundless. "The Pekingman Cave Administration has cooperated well with UNESCO inspectors, both are working towards common goals. Deleting the Pekingman Caves from the World Heritage

List does not aid preservation work in Zhoukoudian," noted Mr. Du.

The Pekingman Caves at Zhoukoudian lie 50 kilometers southwest of Beijing. Discovered and excavated from 1921 to 1927, Zhoukoudian is one of the richest archaeological finds of lower Paleolithic man to date. Caves at the Dragon Bone Mountain (Longgu Shan) of Zhoukoudian contain the Pekingman fossils which have made it a household name around the world.

Not only will the Caves remain on UNESCO's list, Du adds, "There is no plan to list the Pekingman Caves as an endangered heritage," explaining that placing a site on the endangered list brings political and public pressure to the management organization.

Professor Mu Huichong of the Geog-

raphy Department of the Chinese Academy of Science, reported to *Beijing Today* that only 8 of 27 fossil sites are in danger. Within those 8 sites, there are 21 specific issues, according to Mu.

Both natural and man-made factors have contributed to the deterioration of Zhoukoudian, says Mu. Environmental factors include: rain, ice, dramatic temperature changes, root system and other plant growth. Extensive economic development surrounding the Caves have harmed its preservation, most notably: coal mining and cement refining. Acid rain caused by general industry has caused extensive corrosion of the limestone mountain at the site.

According to the *Star Daily*, a proposal to better preserve the Zhoukoudian

Pekingman Relic Park is in the works. The plan will span 3-5 years to review environmental impact while protecting the relics, build up the existing park and maintain the pleasant environs. Planners hope to open a museum at the edge of protection zone.

Additional government actions have enhanced cave preservation. Within a 6 kilometer radius of the Caves, all factories have been forced to close with the last cement factory closing by year end. Over 100,000 trees have been planted in Zhoukoudian Districts last year while cleaning up of the river is underway.

EXECUTIVE EDITOR: ZHANG XIAOXIA
EDITOR: XIAO RONG
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Pekingman Caves not in danger of collapse.
Photo by Wei Tong

Furniture Makers Fight US Dumping Charge

By Yu Shanshan

Along with textiles, television sets and steel, 135 domestic furniture manufactures have been added to the US blacklist. At a total value of US\$1 billion, this is the largest dumping case China has faced to date. China exported US\$2.8 billion worth of furniture to the United States last year, with exports of wooden bedroom furniture accounting for half that figure.

On October 31, a coalition of 32 US furniture makers petitioned the US Department of Commerce and the US International Trade Commission to impose anti-dumping duties against Chinese-made wooden bedroom furniture. They cite that Chinese imports are priced too low in the US market.

The Department of Commerce announced last Thursday its decision to initiate an anti-dumping investigation. The International Trade Commission postponed its decision to next month as to whether Chinese furniture makers have threatened the US furniture industry.

The final decision is expected to take up to a year. If anti-dumping duties are imposed, they will range from 158% to 441% on wooden bedroom furniture from China. This will significantly and negatively impact Chinese furniture makers, particularly private export firms.

Chinese furniture makers claim that the US accusation of code violation is groundless. "Our furniture is popular among American consumers with low prices and good quality,"



A Chinese artisan sandpapers a new table, made to look like antique furniture at a factory October 27, 2003 outside Beijing, China. Photo by Natalie Behring-Chisholm / Getty Images

said Zhao, a manager at Changjiang Furniture Co. "We can offer lower prices because of lower production costs in China," he adds.

After 14 US manufactures announced that they might raise lawsuit, a national anti-dumping committee at Dongguan, Guangdong Province was formed. The China National Furniture Association also set up an anti-dumping office to provide both knowledge and financial support for domestic furniture companies involved. So far, the commit-

tee has raised over US\$1.5 million to defray legal costs and support other anti-dumping efforts.

"US furniture sellers will pay more for popular Chinese products, which will result in further unemployment," said Cao Yingchao, secretary-general of the China National Furniture Association. Chinese furniture accounts for a high volume of business for US furniture importers, wholesalers and retailers; creating a lot of jobs in the United States, Cao said.

Even US furniture buyers doubt the charge will succeed. A US buyer, who declined to be named, told *Shanghai Daily* during the 9th China International Furniture Expo this September, "The US companies' battle will be fruitless, because China is too important a partner for the American furniture industry to lose."

Cao told *Beijing Today* that US furniture companies participating in the petition have dropped from 32 to 28.

China Gets "Green Card" System

By Wang Xiaoxiao

China will introduce a national "Green Card" system for foreigners to attract foreign professionals and capital, announced an official of the Exit and Entry Management Bureau of the China Ministry of Public Security.

The official said the Ministry of Public Security has already established regulations for management, examination and approval of the permanent residence permit for foreign nationals.

If approved by the State Council,

the "Green Card" will allow foreign nationals to bypass annual registration with public security offices, and enter and exit China without a separate travel visa.

Demand for a more user-friendly system for foreign nationals has increased as China's economic development and social progress have stepped up. With an increasing number of foreign nationals living in China as well as returned Chinese from abroad, permanent residence has become an increasingly pressing issue.

Opinions Aired About New Subway Line Pricing

By Dong Nan

Beijing Municipal Development and Reform Committee held a public hearing on Saturday about the pricing of the newly built Batong subway line, officially opening on December 26.

Prices finalized at three yuan for a single ticket and five yuan for transfer ticket.

Twenty-one representatives aired their opinions. Ten participants felt the price was reasonable. Nine thought the prices were too high, proposing instead two yuan for a single ticket and five yuan for transfers.

"Lower prices would help foster the market," said representative Li Guixiang, who is a community officer of Tongzhou District.

She added that it costs only two yuan by bus to get to the Beijing Railway Station from her

community but five yuan via the new subway.

Zhan Minghui, representative from Beijing Subway Company, said that both subway management and operation are costly so citizens can choose between various traffic methods according to their needs.

"Considering the high cost of building and maintaining the subway, the price is reasonable," concurred Xue Hui, representative from Beijing Public Traffic Company.

Outside east fourth ring road, the Batong subway line starts at the Sihui station of No.1 subway line. Until the terminus at Tuqiao station (Tongzhou District), the new line stretches 18.95 kilometers with 13 stations. The speed of the train tops out at 70 kilometers per hour.



Wang Xuebing on the court December 10

Bribed Banker Sentenced

Wang Xuebing, former president of the China Construction Bank (CCB) and former general manager of the New York branch of the Bank of China, was sentenced last Wednesday to 12 years imprisonment for bribe-taking in the first ruling of the Beijing No.2 Intermediate People's Court.

The CCB, one of China's four major state-run commercial banks, deals mainly in the medium and long-term credit

business.

Wang was expelled last November from the Communist Party of China (CPC) for bribe-taking, leading a decadent life and breaking financial rules. He was an alternate member of the 15th Central Committee of the CPC.

Wang admitted to embezzlement and accepting bribes and expensive gifts worth millions of yuan, CPC sources said. (Xinhua)

Old City Saved by New Rules

By Dong Nan

The Beijing Municipal Programming Committee issued a new regulation entitled *Beijing Construction Layout Design General Rules* to protect the old city proper of Beijing.

The ten areas covered by the regulation include: ancient rivers and lakes, traditional axis of the capital, the old imperial city, T-shape walls of the old city, roads and alleys, building height, city sightlines, street appearance, building color and ancient trees.

Where ancient rivers and lakes have dried up, plans are underway to recover them. Targeted rivers and lakes include: Zhuan River,

Changpu River, Yu (royal) River, Yuzao Pool, Lianhua Pool and Qiansanmen Moat. The regulation stipulates that roofs of single-story buildings in the old city must be sloped, gray in color and sparingly use colored glazed tiles.

The regulation also seeks to reinstitute the traditional temple fairs of old Beijing which have disappeared such as: Changdian Temple Fair in Xuanwu District as well as Baitasi Temple Fair and Huguosi Temple Fair. Traditional markets in Dashila, Liulichang, Qianmen, Shichahai and Longfusi are prioritized as key areas for preservation.

Public Security Review

By Wang Xiaoxiao

Criminal cases declined by 3.6% from the previous week, according to the Beijing 110 emergency hotline. The majority of crimes are still thefts, robberies and swindles.

Recent cases have occurred mostly in commercial areas near financial institutions and building complexes, so police have strengthened their patrol of these areas. Since the "100-day Winter Campaign Against Crime", 1084 suspects have already been nabbed.

Swindlers using fake telephone or IP cards were caught last week. The suspects haggled for a discount to buy a large volume of cards from small roadside vendors. Upon receiving the cards, the suspects refused to pay, citing an insufficient discount. They then returned substituted fake cards to the vendor.

Thefts accounted for 77% of criminal cases reported with burglaries, auto thefts and pickpockets accounting for the majority. Burglaries occurred mostly in unenclosed and unguarded building complexes, office buildings and storehouses during late night or early morning hours. Street robberies occurred mostly in: Datun, Yangzha Chaoyang District, Kandan Fengtai District, Dongsheng, Huayu-anlu and Yongfeng Haidian District.

Police urged citizens not to carry too much cash or valuables during the holiday season.

(Information from Beijing Public Security Bureau)

EU Culture Commissioner Visits Beijing

By Xiao Rong

Viviane Reding, European Commissioner of Education and Culture, arrived in Beijing on Wednesday for a five-day visit to China.

Reding's meetings with high-level officials in both education and cultural fields represents the highest level meetings to date between the European Commission and China, just two months after Beijing called on the EU to strengthen cultural dialogue in its recently released Policy Paper on EU relations.

Issues such as the UNESCO International Convention on Cultural Diversity as well as cooperation in the fields of culture, education, training, film and sports will be on the agenda of Reding's meeting with State Councillor Chen Zhili.

Commissioner Reding expects the soon-to-be-launched Erasmus Mundus Programme of the European Union, offering European masters degrees and scholarships for non-European students starting in 2004, to attract strong participation from China's students.

She will meet with Jiang Xiaoyu, Vice President of the Beijing Olympic Organizing Committee, to get updated on Beijing's Cultural Olympics as well as issues related to sport policy.

European media and cultural industry businesses in Beijing will have a chance to share their concerns and experiences with the Commissioner. Tomorrow afternoon, she visits CCTV and the Dashanzi Art District (Factory 798).

Shishahai Bars Chamber of Commerce Established

By Shan Jinliang

A Chamber of Commerce was established last Friday in Beijing to ensure smooth operations of the bars in the Shishahai area. This follows on the establishment of the Shishahai Bars Self-Disciplinary Association earlier this year.

Comprised of Qianhai, Xihai and Houhai areas in Dongcheng District, Shishahai grew unchecked this year despite SARS. Both local district government and the bars themselves sought to counter the increasing noise, traffic congestion and crime. The Shishahai Bars Self-disciplinary Association established in August helped bars organize themselves so as to keep the ever-popular area quiet, clean and safe.

The 63-member strong Shishahai Chamber of Commerce, under the Federation of Industry and Commerce of Dongcheng District, include: restaurants, bars, teahouses and handicrafts shops.

In the ten rules signed last Friday, chamber members committed to maintain the charming environment by banning pornography, gambling and drugs. They also agreed to treat customers fairly, keep all new construction legal and keep noise levels to a minimum so as not to disturb local residents.

2004 Hong Kong Arts Festival Opens

By Ji Runju

Founded by a former director of the world-famous Edinburgh Festival, the well-regarded 32nd Hong Kong Art Festival opens February 3 and runs until March 7, 2004. Opening weekend will see a free outdoor programme overlooking Hong Kong's beautiful waterfront.

This year's festival will offer a total of 111 performances, 51 different programmes and 36 performing groups plus three exhibitions and four outdoor performances. 700 artists arrive in Hong Kong from all corners of the world, joining 450 Hong Kong artists and 160 mainland Chinese performers.

Diverse performances on offer include: two Beijing Opera performances, the London Symphony Orchestra, jazz vocalist Bobby McFerrin, the Zurich Ballet, Tokyo Notes by Seinendan (which won Japan's most prestigious award for best new play) along with a host of both classic and contemporary performances.

A special Festival Package offers an exclusive 15% discount on festival tickets to visitors from Beijing and Shanghai. Visit www.hk.artsfestival.org for more information and ticket bookings.

L'Oreal Acquires Major Domestic Skincare Brand

By Xiao Rong

With the announcement last Thursday of its acquisition of Mininurse, a top Chinese skincare product brand, L'Oreal Group is set to expand its presence in the huge domestic market.

The merger is the first such move by the global cosmetics giant since it entered the China market in 1997. L'Oreal has not revealed the exact price of the purchase.

"Aimed at young women with a natural style, Mininurse complements our brand portfolio perfectly, and enables us to move more quickly into the Chinese consumer skincare market," said Paolo Gasparrini, general manager of L'Oreal China, at a press conference held last Thursday in Beijing for the acquisition.

Launched in 1992, Mininurse has grown into one of the top three domestic brands of skincare products. The company holds a five percent share of the nationwide market, and its sales for 2003 are expected to reach approximately 40 million euros.

Through the acquisition, L'Oreal has also picked up a manufacturing plant in the city of Yichang in central China's Hubei Province, which Gasparrini said would enable the company to increase its production capacity in order to match the rapid growth of its brands. Mininurse's distribution and management channels, including its 280,000 distribution outlets nation-



Li Zhida, founder of Mininurse, and Paolo Gasparrini, general manager of L'Oreal China, seal the deal last Thursday in Beijing.

Photos by Bqb

wide, are also part of the deal.

Completion of the transaction is subject to the approval of Chinese authorities and the businesses will not be consolidated until the first half of 2004, according to L'Oreal China.

Even so, the French firm seems optimistic about the potential of this purchase. "This acquisition is an outstanding opportunity to speed up our growth in the Chinese market. It is a major step forward in L'Oreal's development in a market which is strategically important for the group," Lindsay Owen-Jones, chairman and CEO of L'Oreal, was quoted as saying on the group's website.

L'Oreal reported sales of 113 million euros in China in 2002 and has

achieved 66 percent growth in sales in local currency terms in the first nine months of 2003.

When asked at the press conference, whether he was concerned about the future of Mininurse, Li Zhida, the brand's founder and chairman of Raystar Cosmetics (Shenzhen), expressed confidence, saying, "Mininurse is a fully grown brand in China, I'm sure that L'Oreal will make it grow further with its advanced technology and rich experience in the cosmetics industry."

Many previous acquisitions of domestic cosmetics brands by foreign companies have ended up less than successful. Meijiaying, formerly the No.1 Chinese cosmetics brand, was leased to Unilever

in 1989, after which its sales volume dropped from 240 million yuan that year to 60 million yuan in 1993. The brand did not return to form until 1994 when original owner Shanghai Family Cosmetics Production Corporation bought the brand back.

Panda washing powder, a Beijing-based brand, suffered a similar sales slump after it signed a seven-year joint venture deal, its annual production shrinking from 60,000 tons to 4,000 tons during the contract period.

However, not all mergers have been fruitless. The domestic brand Hai Er Mian, known for its skin cream for children, was acquired by Henkel KgaA in 1996 and has since continued to develop.

"The future of Mininurse is hard to predict. It will depend on L'Oreal's business strategy," Zhang Dianyi, chairman of the China Association of Fragrance, Flavor and Cosmetics Industry was quoted as saying by *Shanghai Daily* last Friday.

Gasparrini reassured the press that Mininurse would not disappear from the market after the merger, and instead L'Oreal would utilize all its industry resources to build Mininurse into "a star brand." The French firm plans to combine marketing efforts for Mininurse and Garnier, the group's hair colorant brand, in China.

"We will treat Mininurse like our own child," Gasparrini promised.

Stone Electronic Shifts Focus to Healthcare Sector

By Shan Jinliang

Hong Kong-listed domestic IT company Stone Electronic Technology moved outside the information industry on Monday by acquiring a 75 percent share of Shanghai GoldPartner Biotech Corporation.

The acquisition cost Stone Electronic Technology 1.24 billion yuan, 636 million yuan of which was paid in cash and the rest paid in convertible bonds.

Information from the Hong Kong Stock Exchange shows that if the convertible bonds are turned into shares in Stone Electric Technology, it would make GoldPartner's founder, Shi Yuzhu, the major shareholder in that



Duan Yongji



Shi Yuzhu

company. After the acquisition, Shi will keep a 25 percent stake in Shanghai GoldPartner and manage Stone Electronic Technology's new healthcare business.

The core assets targeted in the ac-

quisition are the over 50,000 nationwide sales terminals for GoldPartner and Naobaijin, Shanghai GoldPartner Biotech's major healthcare products.

Stone Electronic Technology chairman Duan Yongji announced plans on

Monday to strengthen the marketing networks for both products and build Shanghai GoldPartner Biotech into a medical and healthcare group. He added that consumption of health care products in China has been growing at a compounded annual rate of 45 percent over the last decade.

Stone Electronic, a holding company under Beijing-based Stone Group, is also a major shareholder of the Chinese portal website Sina, which is listed on the US' Nasdaq index. While Stone Electric's performance has been falling over the past three years, its share value rebounded markedly after the acquisition was announced.

Huaneng Grabs 50 Percent of OzGen

China Huaneng Group, one of the nation's five largest electricity generating firms, agreed on Tuesday to pay US\$227 million for a 50 percent share of OzGen, an Australian subsidiary of Boston-based InterGen.

The deal marks the first time a Chinese company has sought to acquire major overseas assets in the power-generating sector.

Huaneng beat out Sime Darby of Hong Kong, Australia's Origin Energy and Stanwell Corp, a state-owned plant in Queensland, to win the bidding.

OzGen holds a 53.7 percent stake in the 880-megawatt Millmerran power plant and a 50 percent stake in the 920-megawatt Callide C power plant, both of which are located in Queensland, Australia.

"The plants have some of the lowest production costs in the Australian power market," Huaneng announced in a statement on Tuesday.

An analyst with a leading investment bank in Australia said it was difficult to evaluate the deal, as little information has been released.

"Basically, Huaneng can get stable cash flow from the acquisition as the power market in Australia is mature and the generators are new and run at low cost," the analyst, who requested anonymity, told *China Daily*.

He continued that Huaneng also stood a good chance of getting a bargain price because electricity tariffs in Queensland are falling due to market oversupply, the analyst added.

The time is right for Chinese firms seeking to buy generating assets in Australia, as US companies are withdrawing their investments from the region, mostly as a result of their own financial problems, the analyst said.

Li Xiaopeng, Huaneng Group's chairman and president, told *China Daily* the deal was an important step for Huaneng to expand its foreign presence and become a Global 500 firm by 2010.

Li said the acquisition would lead to solid profit returns. Huaneng has invited a dozen investment banks to help evaluate the assets and they believe the cost of the acquisition is consistent with international standards, he added. (Xinhua)

Standard & Poor Offers A-share Indices with Chinese Partner

Prominent investment research, indices and ratings provider Standard & Poor (S&P) and China's CITIC Securities signed an agreement in Beijing on Monday to jointly develop a new series of indices covering China's A-share stock market.

Wang Dongming, chairman of CITIC Securities, said at the ceremony held to announce the move that the cooperation would accelerate the creation and development of index products in China and step up the internationalization of the domestic equity market.

Under the agreement, two new

indices will be developed, namely S&P/CITIC A-shares 300, a broad benchmark index, and S&P/CITIC A-Shares 50, a tradable index of the largest and most liquid stocks from S&P/CITIC A-shares 300.

"We now feel the time is ripe for S&P to enter China," said Robert Shakotko, managing director of S&P Index services, adding that China had become a market of tremendous opportunities for both domestic and international investors.

In line with China's growing maturity as an investment market and international investors' growing demand for insight and

information, an accurate, transparent and globally comparable benchmark that allowed investors to gauge performance with confidence was more essential than ever, Shakotko said.

He said S&P and CITIC Securities also planned to establish a joint venture soon to boost cooperation in the fields of index development and market promotion.

CITIC Securities is a subsidiary of CITIC Holdings and its core businesses are securities underwriting, brokerage, assets management, trading and investment consultation. (Xinhua)

Golden Arches Expands Reach

By David Huang

McDonald's announced plans last Thursday to re-launch its marginally successful McKids line around the world and expand it well beyond kids clothing and toys into interactive videos and books.

The new McKids brand will be re-introduced in spring 2004 in the US, Canada, Mexico, Japan, the Chinese mainland, Australia, South Korea and Taiwan, with additional countries to follow, Chen Qinghui, general manager of McDonald's China, told the press last week.

Chen added that McDonald's has chosen the domestic enterprise Shanghai Langsai Trade Company as its first brand authorizer of McKids in the world. McDonald's will spend \$50 million on promoting McKids worldwide in the next few years.

Some media analysts have called the move a regressive attempt by McDonald's to regain profits

amidst growing global opposition to fast food. The McKids line will not be sold at McDonald's restaurants, but at major retailers, such as Wal-Mart, Toys R Us and Target.

Among the licensing agreements, under which McDonald's is expected to receive royalties of about five percent, are deals with Mattel, Hasbro and Creative Designs.

The fast-food giant has struggled in promoting the children's brand in the past. US-based Sears closed all 47 freestanding McKids clothing stores in 1991 because of poor performance.

Other industry analysts have expressed confidence about McKids' prospects. Cynthia Cohen, president of US-based Strategic Mindshare said the McKids line could flourish in an interview with *USA Today* last week. "Even a three-year-old can identify with a brand, and this will help keep McDonald's top in their minds," she said.



Electricité de France to Design Olympic Aquatic Park

By Tony Shaw

Hydrostadium, a subsidiary of European power giant Electricité de France (EDF), won the bidding for the design of the canoe slalom contest course for the 2008 Beijing Olympics, EDF announced in a press release in Beijing on Tuesday.

The EDF subsidiary will provide the design and technological support for the 280-hectare Aquatic Park in Shunyi District that will host that event. The project is scheduled to start in April 2004 and be completed in September 2006.

Hydrostadium will provide its patented mobile obstacle supplier, called Omniflots, which could reduce the difficulty level of the course from professional to amateur grade after the Games are over.

EDF China deputy manager Zhou Wei said at the Tuesday press conference that the product would first be used at the tenth National Sports Games in Nanjing in 2005 as a trial run.

EDF entered the Chinese market in 1984, and since 2001 has invested \$2.8 billion in this country. Last year, the company moved its Asia Pacific headquarters to Beijing. The company aims to have a significant stake in China's nuclear power development in the future.

Kingsoft Beats Microsoft in Central Bank Buy

By Shan Jinliang

Beijing-based Kingsoft won over Microsoft China in the competition for official selection and procurement of office software by the People's Bank of China, the nation's central bank, last Friday.

The central bank made its final choice after a rigorous two-year testing, trial use and appraisal period. In the end, the bank spent 10 million yuan to purchase 10,000 sets of Kingsoft's WPS software.

The order marked another major success for Kingsoft, following its product being selected as the official office software of Beijing Municipality in late 2001. Though Microsoft controls a near 90 percent share of the domestic market, Kingsoft is definitely a brand on the rise in the software arena.

Kingsoft Chairman Qiu Bojun told China Central Television last Saturday, "Microsoft is a worldwide company, while we are mainly focused on the domestic market. Since we are the size of just part of Microsoft, we can concentrate our strengths and be very competitive."

Microsoft China Public Affairs manager Ma Tao told the press last Friday that the company's software products were still being used in the central bank's treasury and accountant management systems.

Lufthansa Opens Guangzhou-Munich Flights

By Sun Ling

To capitalize on the recent opening of the EU to Chinese tourists, Lufthansa is setting out to expand its business in this country. As a first step, the German airline will open a new Munich to Guangzhou route on February 1 next year.

The new flight will make Guangzhou Lufthansa's fourth destination in China following Beijing, Shanghai and Hong Kong, and will increase its total flights to China to 31 per week.

Guangzhou service will come through a continuing flight from Shanghai on Airbus A340-300 aircraft. The flights will be offered five times a week until March 28, after which service will go daily.

Center Provides Automated Physicals

By Sun Ling

As of last Friday, residents of the capital who want to find out how healthy they really are can do so, thanks to the opening of a world-class body check-up facility in Oriental Plaza, the Meizhao Physical Center. The center was established by Taiwan-based Meizhao, the Beijing Physical Check Center and Hong Kong Health Group with an investment of \$5 million.

The over 3,000-square-meter facility is completely computerized and automated and offers six lines for physical checks that can run simultaneously. A complete check includes 100 items and takes four hours, after which the computers print thorough health status reports for each customer.

Meizhao plans to open another four centers in Shanghai, Guangdong, Qingdao and Dalian in order to meet growing interest in health among residents of major Chinese cities.

Germany, France Agree to Ease Iraq Debt

Berlin, December 17 (AP) — President Bush's special envoy on Iraq won agreement Tuesday from Germany and France, two of the most ardent opponents of the American-led war, to ease Baghdad's huge debt burden.

The agreement came after former Secretary of State James A. Baker III overcame serious German misgivings during a meeting with Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder about the US exclusion of German firms from Iraqi reconstruction. Baker earlier had what he called "very fruitful" talks with French President Jacques Chirac in Paris.

France, Germany and the United States agree that there should be substantial debt reduction for Iraq in the Paris Club, a 19-member group of creditor nations, the leaders of the three nations said in a joint statement issued by the White House Tuesday afternoon.

"Debt reduction is critical if the Iraqi people are to have any chance to build a free and prosperous Iraq," said the statement agreed on by President Bush, French President Jacques Chirac and German Chancellor Gerhard



US special envoy James A. Baker (left) shakes hands with French President Jacques Chirac at the Elysee Palace in Paris. AF Photo

Schroeder. The three said they would "work closely with each other and with other countries to achieve this objective."

The exact percentage of debt reduction that would constitute substantial debt reduction is subject to future agreement between the parties.

The three nations have agreed that having a new government in place — expected next summer — is not a pre-condition for moving forward on

debt forgiveness, a senior Bush administration official said.

It appeared to be an effort to project a united front. Germany and France have been eager to reconcile with the United States despite their misgivings about the US invasion.

Germany repeated its concerns about the contract issue and US officials left open the possibility that they would discuss it further.

Baker's five-nation lobbying

mission was complicated by the Pentagon's exclusion of war opponents from \$18.6 billion in US-financed reconstruction projects in Iraq. Following France and Germany, talks were scheduled in Rome, Moscow and London.

Baker's visit to Rome went off without a hitch, after Italy agreed to support the plan to relieve Baghdad's huge debt burden.

Italy sent troops and aid workers to help in the reconstruction of Iraq. Iraq owes Italy \$1.73 billion, excluding interest, making Italy No. 6 on its list of creditor nations.

(Colleen Barry)

Local Media Reports:

The IMF estimates that Iraq has a foreign debt of \$120 billion, in which, \$4 billion is owed to the US, \$4 billion to Germany, \$8 billion to France, \$8 billion to Russia, \$30 billion to some of the rich Gulf countries and the rest to international institutions. This does not include the \$30 billion war indemnity for the first Gulf War and \$200 billion for the invasion of Kuwait. The total debt accumulated should be \$380 billion.

Before Saddam fell, Iraq earned \$15 billion under the UN "Oil for Food" program. Now, reconstruction of Iraq requires \$40 billion at least each year, a figure that cannot be covered by its oil exports. Therefore, debt exemption is a must.

If the US wants the Paris club members to exempt Iraq's debt, it has to provide some other benefits for compensation. At present, the US is excluding French, German, Russian and Chinese companies from the bidding for construction projects in Iraq. It seems more like a preparation for bargaining as James Baker is in Europe this week dealing with each country for the bargaining clauses.

Another possible financing method is to open the reconstruction market in Iraq to private investors and risk management investment. But the US has not decided to open the door yet.

— Li Shaoxian, senior researcher for Iraqi affairs, Chinese Institute for Contemporary International Affairs Studies, Xinhuanet.com, December 6

Don't Scapegoat China

Washington, December 14 (AFP) — Federal Reserve Chairman Alan Greenspan warned against making China a scapegoat for all the ills of the American labor market.

The renminbi is widely believed to be markedly undervalued, and it is claimed that a rise in the renminbi will slow exports from China to the United States — which, according to some, will create increased job opportunities for Americans at home.

"The story on trade and jobs, in my judgment, is a bit more complex," Greenspan told a group of Texas business executives Thursday.

In fact, "a rise in the value of the renminbi would be unlikely to have much, if any, effect on aggregate employment in the United States," Greenspan warned.

"US imports from China would fall," presumed Greenspan, "but far more likely is that our imports from other low-wage countries would replace Chinese textiles."

Greenspan warned against a new protectionist tendency gaining hold in the US.

"For the most part, we as a nation have not engaged in significant and widespread protectionism for more than five decades," he said, adding: "The consequences of moving in that direction in today's far more globalized financial world could be unexpectedly destabilizing."

US, China to Discuss Trade Gap

Washington, December 11 (Reuters) — Top US and Chinese officials will meet in Washington next spring to discuss ways of reducing a huge trade gap that has strained the overall relationship, a senior US official said.

Deputy US Trade Representative Josette Shiner told Reuters the US-Sino commission would focus on ways to expand US exports to China — particularly from small and mid-sized firms — while keeping the US market open.

"It is our intention to bring our trade relationship with China into a position where it's win-win for both sides. Premier Wen confirmed when he was here that he will help with that and wants that to happen too," Shiner said.

US Trade Representative Robert Zoellick and Commerce Secretary Don Evans will co-chair the spring meeting with Chinese Vice Premier Wu Yi, she said.

(Doug Palmer)

Analysts' Take:

The US has never backed away from destructive measures that damage bilateral trade ties. The most common tool is anti-dumping cases which, so far this year, have covered imports from China such as steel products, TV sets, concentrated apple juice, textiles, garments, and even bras. The latest item is wooden furniture.

Last month, the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) announced a renewal of registration for all food and drug imports, covering 80 percent of the food and drug exports from China.

— Yang Jijian, senior researcher for American and Oceanic Studies,

Chinese Academy of International Trade and Economic Cooperation

Local Media Reports:

Trade barriers cannot explain the US trade deficits with the outside world. China's imports reached \$295 billion in 2002 and have increased by 40 percent in the first nine months of this year. The whole year's imports are expected to exceed \$400 billion, surpassing Japan as the third largest importer after the US and Germany.

The real problem in the US trade deficit with China is that the US 'cannot' or 'won't' provide the commodities China 'can buy' and is 'willing to buy', such as competitively priced commodities and technologies China needs in its modernization.

— www.english.peopledaily.com.cn, December 8, 2003



South Korea Hit by Deadly Bird Flu

SEOUL (AFP) — The South Korean government said it would slaughter 137,000 chickens and ducks raised within a three kilometer (1.8 mile) radius of a poultry farm southeast of Seoul to prevent the spread of a bird flu virus potentially fatal to humans.

All poultry eggs in the area surrounding the farming town of Umseong in the central province of North Chungcheong will also be destroyed.

South Korea's agriculture ministry said the recent death of chickens at the farm was caused by a variant of the same H5N1 bird flu virus that killed six people in Hong Kong in 1997.

Officials said that since Friday the virus had killed 21,000 of 26,000 chickens at the farm in Umseong, Chungcheong Province, 130 kilometers (80 miles) south of Seoul.

Xinhua / AFP Photo

Japan and ASEAN Boost Economic Ties

Tokyo, December 12 (Reuters) — Japan and a group of Southeast Asian nations have agreed to tighten security and economic ties. Tokyo said it would soon start free trade talks with Malaysia, Thailand and the Philippines.

Japan's concern about its role in fast-growing Southeast Asia has grown since 2002, when Beijing signed a pact setting a framework for talks on free trade agreements (FTAs) with the 10-member Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).

Analysts said the two-day summit was a chance for Japan to court Southeast Asia by emphasizing its history of friendship — and generous financial aid — in the face of China's advances in the region.

Business groups applauded the decision to start FTA talks with Thailand, Malaysia and the Philippines, hailing it as a crucial step towards a trade pact with ASEAN as a whole.

Talks are expected to start early in 2004 and Japanese officials said they hoped deals could be sealed by the start of 2005, when Tokyo wants to start talks on an ASEAN-wide pact.

Earlier in October, China, Japan, and South Korea promised to issue a joint declaration on enhancing their trade ties as well.

China, which wants to conclude a free trade agreement with Japan and South Korea, broached the idea of the first joint statement by the government heads of the three biggest Asian economies, the Nihon Keizai Shimbun said.

The communique will call for stronger economic ties with a view to a future free trade, the business daily said.

(Elaine Lies)

Analysts' Take:

In general, China-Japan bilateral trade is growing rapidly and smoothly. Total trade volume reached \$101.9 billion last year, with China's exports to Japan valued at \$48.4 billion and imports at \$53.4 billion. China has a trade deficit of nearly \$5 billion.

Japan launched a number of anti-dumping investigations on China's agricultural exports, and China launched several cases against industrial products from Japan in retaliation. But most of the cases have been solved.

The free trade pact between Japan, South Korea and China

is encouraging and promising. Japan and South Korea started their negotiations years ago. China is still studying the plan. Agricultural products and industrial products are the two most sensitive issues, as neither side wants to be hurt by the possible inflow of these products.

— Xu Changwen, senior researcher for Japanese Studies, Chinese Academy of International Trade and Economic Cooperation

Over 14,000 Japanese companies conduct business in China and most of them are making a profit. Japan ranks third in terms of foreign investment inflow to China with 8 percent of the total volume China has received. Japanese investors are mainly involved in the production of precision instruments and equipment, car and components manufacturing, and bio-science and technology development.

Therefore, we have no reason not to follow and further push such prosperous bilateral economic and trade ties.

— Hisao Toshimura, chairman, Nikkei BP Publications, Japan

Pension Fund Sues NYSE

New York, December 17, (USA Today) — Calpers, the USA's largest public pension fund sued the New York Stock Exchange and seven floor-trading firms on Tuesday, for alleged illegal trading.

Calpers, which manages \$157 billion for 1.4 million California public employees, says the NYSE specialist trading firms bilked investors of at least \$150 million by using "front-running" and other illegal practices. Calpers charges that the NYSE did nothing to stop the alleged practices in which specialists use inside knowledge about pent-up demand for certain stocks to profit at the expense of investors.

(Matt Krantz and Thor Valdmanis)



Boeing CEO Harry Stonecipher Reuters Photo

Boeing Opens Book on 7E7

Seattle, December 17 (Reuters) — Boeing Co. said it would begin booking orders for the 7E7, or "Dreamliner" as it's been named. Some reports have suggested that Japan's All Nippon Airways might sign up first.

Designed to save cash-strapped airlines money on fuel and operating costs and help Boeing claw back sales from bitter rival Airbus SAS, the mid-sized wide-body 7E7 is due to enter airline service in 2008.

Chicago-based Boeing said it would build the 200-250-seat 7E7 in the Seattle suburb of Everett, Washington.

(Chris Stetkiewicz)



Headquarters of Sony Music in Tokyo

Sony, Bertelsmann Seal Music Merger Deal

Berlin, December 15 (Reuters) — German media company Bertelsmann and Sony of Japan agreed on a merger of their music units in the latest move to consolidate the ailing industry today. The tie-up will create the world's second-largest record label. The joint venture is named Sony BMG and is expected to help cut costs as the industry grapples with weak retail sales, online file-sharing and fierce competition with other forms of entertainment. The deal still needs the approval of both European and US competition watchdogs.

(Boris Groendahl)

Volvo Knows What Women Want

Goteborg, Sweden, December 16 (USA Today) — About 100 women at Volvo are designing a car for affluent, independent women.

It's definitely not pink. The concept car, which will make its debut at the Geneva Auto Show in March, is a silver, sporty coupe with gull-wing doors, a 225-horsepower engine and tons of storage space. It's easy to park and easy to maintain.

Volvo hopes the prototype will send a message to female buyers, who have long felt neglected by male designers and disrespected by dealerships.

(Noelle Knox)

Motorola Picks Zander

Chicago, December 16 (Reuters) — Motorola Inc., struggling to regain its once lofty position as the world's biggest cell-phone maker, on Tuesday named former Sun Microsystems Inc. President Edward Zander as its chairman and chief executive.

Chairman and CEO Christopher Galvin, 53, announced his planned departure from the Schaumburg, Illinois, company in September, citing strategic differences with the board.

The move ended three generations of leadership under the founding Galvin family. Zander, now at private equity firm Silver Lake Partners, will join Motorola on January 5.

(Ben Klayman)

Court Rules on Zhuhai Scandal

The notorious mass prostitution case relating to a group of Japanese tourists that came to China in September was adjudicated Wednesday, with two Chinese defendants sentenced to life imprisonment and another 12 sentenced to two to 15 years in prison for organizing prostitution or assisting the organization of prostitution.

The Zhuhai Intermediate People's Court of Guangdong Province made the verdict after the first trial of the case.

Between September 16 and 18 this year, more than 400 Japanese male tourists patronized at least 500 Chinese prostitutes at the five-star Zhuhai International Conference Centre Hotel.

The incident caused an uproar among the Chinese public because it oc-



Fukunaga Koji



Hirdbe Isao



Takahashi Shunji

cured around the same day as the September 18 Incident of 1931 that marked the beginning of the Japanese occupa-

tion of Northeast China. Moreover, prostitution is illegal in this country.

In October, the director and a dep-

uty director of the Zhuhai Municipal Bureau of Public Security were punished in connection with the case.

Chinese police have also requested Interpol to issue red notices for three Japanese citizens suspected of organizing prostitution in Zhuhai that are still at large.

The three Japanese, Hirdbe Isao, Takahashi Shunji and Fukunaga Koji, stand accused of organizing prostitution for over 200 Japanese tourists during their stay at the Zhuhai hotel, police sources said.

The Chinese Foreign Ministry has made gestures towards Japanese authorities to request assistance in the capture of the three suspects.

(Xinhua)

Famed Director Sentenced for Taking Bribes

By Sun Ming

Zhao An, a prominent director of CCTV programs, was sentenced to 10 years in prison and fines of 200,000 yuan for accepting bribes in his first trial by the Beijing First Intermediate Court last Friday.

Zhao, 44, was found guilty of accepting a bribe of 610,000 yuan, including musical equipment worth 500,000 yuan, from songwriter Zhang Junyi between 1994 and 2000. Before he was arrested in early October last year, Zhao was serving as the director of CCTV's Arts Department.

According to the indictment, Zhao often made use of his position to showcase Zhang's music on nationally televised evening parties after accepting the bribes. From his seat in the audience, Zhang was also featured in close-up shots during such programs directed by Zhao.



Zhao An

After entering CCTV in 1984, Zhao served as the general director of CCTV's massive annual Spring Festival evening party programs four times. These programs, shown every lunar New Year's Eve, have been among the most popular programs on domestic television each year since they debuted in 1983.

Zhao is also the only person to have won the Star Light award, the top award in China's TV industry, for six consecutive years.

"He looked quite nervous in court. Zhao used to have a resounding voice, but before the court, he answered questions in a very low voice. The chief judge had to remind him many times to speak clearly," reported the Sichuan-based *Chengdu Daily* last Saturday.

The same day, the court sentenced Zhang Junyi, 38, to six years in prison for giving bribes and for libel.

According to the indictment notice, after he learned that Zhao An was being investigated by the police, Zhang distributed over 200 anonymous letters to related government departments between September and October last year accusing CCTV leaders of trying to cover up Zhao's crimes. Zhang was arrested on October 15 last year.

Zhang's father, Zhang Rongju, told *Beijing Star Daily* in a phone interview last Friday that his son had decided to appeal the case, but Zhao's lawyer, Qian Lieyang, has made no statements on his client's reaction to the verdict.



Ed Jocelyn (left) and Andrew McEwen say their 384-day odyssey was, "made possible by the kindness and hospitality of thousands of people who live in those far-flung places."

Photo by Geng Lei

Show of Shots from New Long March

By Chen Ying

The first exhibition of photos taken during the New Long March, the epic 384-day retracing of the Red Army's historic march by Englishmen Ed Jocelyn (left) and Andrew McEwen, opened at the Xiangshenghang studio near the China National Museum of Fine Arts on Thursday.

The odyssey, which began on Oc-

tober 16 last year, took the two men across some of the poorest, most isolated regions of this country. "It was made possible by the kindness and hospitality of thousands of people who live in those far-flung places, places where no foreigner had ever been seen," said McEwen.

He explained the seven-day exhibition, titled Remember My Name, is

meant to honor the marchers' promise not to forget the men, women and children who helped them along the road to the adventure of a lifetime. Over 40 portraits of those people are on show in the not-for-profit event, the aim of which is to raise funds for developing, printing and sending around 1,500 photos to some of the countless Chinese friends of the New Long March.

Mysterious Forces at Work on Badaling Expressway?

By Dong Nan

Commuters, but not physicists, have been confounded by a strange slope along the Badaling Expressway that shows such unnatural phenomena as water flowing uphill and stopped cars defying gravity on their own.

The slope is located near the expressway's Juyongguan exit, and its gradient looks obvious to the human eye. A car that is stopped at the edge of the slope will actually begin rolling forward on its own, reaching speeds of up to 10 kilometers per hour after around 50 meters. Water poured on the ground in front of the slope will similarly flow uphill.

According to a report in *Beijing Youth Daily* on Sunday, an unnamed road maintenance worker said that on rainy days, water collects at the top of the slope and does not drain immediately off. He explained that the bizarre natural behavior is actually a result of misperception, but did not elaborate.

Beijing Youth Daily reported on a similar slope at Yangtaishan in Beianhe Village, Haidian District, in 2001. This July, experts from Chinese Academy of Science and Chinese Seismological Bureau released a carefully researched report of their findings on the site that concludes that the seemingly unnatural phenomenon is actually caused by natural problems in human sight processing caused by depth perception.

According to the *Beijing Youth Daily* article, such strange slopes show up all over the whole world. In China, similar sites of bizarre phenomena have been reported in the northeastern cities of Jinan and Shenyang. In the past, some scientists hypothesized such phenomena was the result of pockets of abnormal gravity, unusual magnetic fields or even interaction with the fourth dimension. Today, most experts agree they are simply results of misperception naturally caused by how the brain processes sight information. That is most likely the case with this local slope, though an authoritative analysis has yet to be made.

Fake Bomb Sparks Chaos at Local Office Building

By Wang Xiaoxiao

A man who claimed to be carrying a bomb broke into the ground floor of the China Information Market in Fuxingmen at noon on Monday and threatened to set off the device. Police negotiators managed to talk the man into giving himself up and turning over the bomb, which was quickly identified as a fake.

Police received a report on the event at 11:40 am that day and arrived at the scene five minutes later, bringing with them a special bomb squad. People working in the building were quickly evacuated as the police began negotiations with the man holding the supposed bomb, a brown tube-shaped item with visible thin red and white wires he was carrying in a half-open black briefcase.

After talking to Yu Lianwei, vice director of the Haidian Police Substation, for 15 minutes, the man agreed to turn over the bomb. It was quickly identified as a fake device he had personally crafted out of clay. The suspect was escorted away by police at 12:15 pm and things quickly got back to normal at the office building.

Later, the man confessed to the police that his name was Li Jun and was from Liuhe County in Jilin Province. He made the bomb threat in order to exact revenge on a company that had swindled him two years before. At that time, he was convinced by a TV advertisement to spend 4,000 yuan to purchase a patented technology in

Beijing, but later found his purchase did not work.

A week before he committed the crime, he read an advertisement similar to the one that had duped him and suspected it was also fraudulent. In order to send the offending company a warning, he fashioned the fake bomb the day before he came to Beijing. On Sunday afternoon, he went to the company and talked with them about possible technology transfer, and then returned the next day with his clay bomb to get revenge.



The "bomb" was made of clay and paper.

Photo by Hu Rong



The enraged suppliers left destruction in their wake at the Wangjia Supermarket in Chengzhuang

Photo by Li Muiyi

Suppliers Loot Wangjia Chain Supermarkets

By Wang Xiaoxiao

Friday and Saturday last week, the store-rooms and shelves of four stores under the Wangjia Supermarket chain were plucked clean of goods by the stores' former suppliers. Exactly what sparked the raids remains unknown, but according to an article in *Beijing Youth Daily* on Monday, some suppliers claimed the manager of the markets had run off without paying for the supplied goods.

When *Beijing Youth Daily* reporters arrived at the supermarket branch in Chengzhuang, Fengtai District, the police had set up a divider to keep the angry suppliers from going back into the store. One supplier said he was told the day before by the supermarket's managers to take back all his goods by noon on Friday. Other suppliers got similar messages, but on the spot, they began to take each others' goods and the situation quickly dissolved into complete chaos until the police arrived.

Following the raids, empty boxes and garbage were scattered all over the floor of the four stores. A guard at one store told *Beijing Youth Daily* that the store's management had disappeared, leaving only security personnel behind.

One supplier, Mr. Wu (pseudonym), said he had not received payment for supplied goods from the supermarkets since August. Last month, he finally received a check from the chain's management promising prompt payment, but when he met other suppliers on Saturday, he learned they had all received similar checks, which are of no legal or monetary value. Repeated attempts to contact the chain's management have been unsuccessful.

Last year, an outlet of the Chengshizhiguang supermarket chain and two other local supermarkets closed down, before which they were similarly looted by their former suppliers.

According to the *Beijing Youth Daily* report, an unnamed official from the Beijing Industry and Commerce Bureau said the main factor in the death of so many supermarkets is their untenable operating mode. They do not have their own financial resources and are not able to shift in response to changes in the market, meaning that in this buyers' market, poor operation can quickly lead to missed payments for supplies and subsequent bankruptcy.

Stores Offer Sketchy TV Promotions

By Dong Nan

Weekly advertisements made by electronics stores for limited quantities of televisions at slashed prices have become commonplace in newspapers nationwide. However, according to a report in *Beijing Youth Daily* on Sunday, the ads promise far more than is delivered.

A woman surnamed Li told a *Beijing Youth Daily* reporter about an ad she saw run by the Shijingshan branch of the Suning Electrical Appliance chain pitching five 21-inch Konka color TVs marked down from 1,200 yuan to only 499 yuan. She went to the shop at 8 am this Saturday, before the doors opened, and found there were already nine people lined up hoping to grab one of the bargain TVs, including one person who arrived outside the store at 3 am.

However, as soon as the store opened at 9 am, a salesperson told the waiting consumers that the specially-priced TVs had already been sold. Since it was impossible for customers to have made the purchases without before the people in line, Li and the others decided the advertisements were a trick.

"I will never trust this kind of ad again, nor buy anything from Suning Electrical Appliance," Li told *Beijing Youth Daily*.

Another woman, surnamed Wang, recounted a similar experience that same day. She arrived outside an electrical appliance store in Baishiqiao at 1 am, hoping to purchase a 21-inch Konka color TV with an advertised priced of 566 yuan, when the shop opened at 3 am. Again, when the store opened, she and other customers waiting were told that all 100 of the cheap TVs had been sold.

"I didn't see anyone pay any money or pick up the TVs, so where could they have gone?" Wang raged.

However, an employee at Suning Electrical Appliance surnamed Liu explained to *Beijing Youth Daily* that there were two doors into the store, so that people were able to get in and purchase the TVs before the consumers in line at the other door.

By Xiao Rong

The municipal authorities in Beijing are considering banning begging or performing for money in the capital's subway.

According to the new draft of Beijing Railway Transportation Safety Regulations, released on December 7, "beggars and performers are banned from the subway area, including entrances and exits, platforms and carriages." The draft has been published on the official website of Beijing municipality, www.beijing.gov.cn, with the hope of soliciting public opinions.

Ms. Chujiang, from the legal department of the Beijing Communications Committee, confirmed to *Beijing Today* that the regulation had been drafted by her committee and is awaiting approval by the Legal Office of Beijing Municipality.

On the bulletinboard of www.beijing.gov.cn, 43 citizens have voiced their opinions on the draft. Wider discussions are also being held in the local Beijing media and other sites on the internet.

While many people appear to be in favor of the local government's efforts in restricting begging and performing on the grounds of safety, others oppose the draft for discriminating against the rights of the poor and underprivileged. Opinions follow:

Dmitry Privalov, Beijing correspondent of Russian Daily Newspaper Tpya

It's the responsibility of the Beijing municipal authorities to handle the issue, though regulations could have been issued and enforced earlier.

Beggars are part of everyday life. As a rule, I give money to those who try to earn it — by playing, singing or reciting. Performers and beggars are different. Those just asking for money can be intrusive, and often aggressive, especially when pulling people by the sleeves of their coats.

I believe beggars should be allowed somewhere close to the markets, but should be kept outside big shopping malls and historical or cultural places of interest.

Xiao Zhiguo, deputy director of the Dongcheng District Branch of the Beijing Urban Management Department

I personally don't give money to beggars even though I have sympathy with them. It's hard to tell what their real situation is and I don't want to encourage the evil habit of earning money without having to work.

As a government official on

Cracking Down on Beggars

Subway begging and performing set to be banned



Photo by Li Shuzhan

the other hand, my department helps provide social relief for the poor. Most beggars are jobless non-Beijingers who need help. Only a small number of these people, mostly children, are reluctant to accept relief because they are organized by adults to beg. The government should crack down on this special group of "fake" beggars.

Begging harms the image of the city and can cause security problems, be it in the subway or on the streets. A special social relief team should be established for long-term relief duty.

Tian Siyuan, associate professor at the Law School of Tsinghua University

I often saw people performing for money on the subway

when I was in Japan between 1997 and 2002. Some of these people don't take it as a profession, but as a way of life or a kind of urban culture. Will these performers really pose a threat to safety? Looking from the perspective of personal freedom, whom will they threaten?

A man surnamed Wang, 78, from Anhui Province, begging at the Tian'anmen East Station

My family has suffered because of floods and I went out without telling my children. There are four of us that have rented a room on the fourth ring road at 230 yuan a month.

The reason that I come to the subway is because it's warmer here and easier to get money. But we are often thrown out by the

police. If we were not allowed to beg in the subway, then I would have to return to Anhui.

Zhang Qiang, 23, male singer at the Guomao Subway Station

Some people think that we perform here just to make money, but that's a misunderstanding. I play guitar here every day and can earn 40 to 50 yuan a day at most or only 10 yuan sometimes, which is only enough to pay for my meals and house rent.

The reason I play guitar in the subway is not to make money, but for the love of music. There is a good echo effect down in the subway, just like a studio, so it's an excellent environment for practicing. I can find more inspirations here and I am waiting for a day when somebody will

choose me and invite me to be a singer. There are so many people coming by here, and there must be someone that likes my songs.

Why shouldn't we sing in the subway? Could the government designate a specific place and time for us to play music?

Wang Xinyi, a citizen who voiced an opinion on www.beijing.gov.cn

Performing on the subway is common in lots of countries, but few governments restrict this kind of performing. In many places it is part of their subway culture.

Besides, performing is quite different from begging in the sense that performers make a living by their creative work. So I think the government should be more cautious in issuing the

ban on performing in subway areas. The city should be more tolerant to diversified forms of art.

Mr. Guo, a securities company employee

This kind of ban should have been issued earlier. Begging or performing in the subway, where it's so crowded, can bring potential safety problems. If there was a fire or a bombing incident, these beggars or performers might be a great barrier to the evacuation of people. So I guess that's why all the newspaper stands have been removed from the platform area.

Chen Yongmiao, commentator for *Beijing News*

Issuing the ban on begging in the subway is like supporting society by discriminating against an inferior group. The image of Beijing should not be safeguarded at the price of the livelihood of beggars.

Of course, the ban is justified only if the beggars get some kind of compensating help. In this case, we hope to solve the subway begging problem by way of helping these people, instead of compulsory legislation.

Pan Fengliang, contributor to *Beijing Times*

To forbid begging in certain areas is only an urban management measure rather than an attitude towards a special group. Begging is not illegal, but it might be harmful as it can tarnish the city's image and restrict the movement of citizens.

We must observe the rights of beggars, but we can't ignore the rights of the majority. Only when there is a balance between these two kinds of rights can the public interest be guaranteed.

Ma Shaohua, professor at the Journalism School of Renmin University

For a local regulation awaiting approval, it's a form of democracy for public opinions to be invited on the official website. But for this special kind of democracy, voices of the beggars and performers cannot be heard. This is mainly due to the restrictions they face and their limited ability to express themselves.

So, even if such legislation were approved based on public opinions, the destiny of this inferior group of society is still subject to the will of other people. We can only hope those who have the means of expressing their opinions can contribute in an open and objective way.

A Chinese Pamela Anderson?

By Chen Si

After more than 200 days of medical procedures, Hao Lulu, a 24-year-old Beijing woman has transformed herself. The freelance fashion writer has subjected herself to a series of cosmetic operations, costing a mighty 300,000 yuan, including double eyelid surgery, breast implants and nose and buttock reshaping. The five month project is nearly finished. Liposuction is all that remains.

It has, of course, made Hao a household name overnight. But does it mean thousands of women will start going to hospital asking for surgical makeovers? There seems to be no shortage of takers in Shanghai, Kunming, Chengdu and other parts of China where cosmetic surgery is available. In Sichuan, Huamei Aesthetic and Plastic Hospital receives over 200 phone calls a day inquiring about cosmetic surgery.

Some people see it as a harmless confidence booster. Others think it best not to interfere with nature. Some question whether the chemical materials left in the body after surgery might be harmful. Opinions follow:

Wen Bangzhi, manager of the Planning Department of Huamei Aesthetic and Plastic Hospital

People get cosmetic surgery to seek beauty, and make it easier to get a good job or fame. More beautiful means more confident. With the development of China, people are becoming wealthier

so the cosmetic surgery industry is also growing. So if people have the chance to become more beautiful, why not try it?

Li Qingfeng, an expert in cosmetic surgery from the Chinese Medical Association

What a ridiculous thought! Though it is a kind of magic, it only improves a person's appearance. There is no improvement of their knowledge, ability or disposition at all. I completely don't understand what they are thinking. Are we producing beauty or producing sorrow? What these women really need is a psychologist, not a plastic surgeon.

Duan Congxin, male, 24, works for Beijing Capital International Airport

I greatly approve of cosmetic surgery. Everyone likes being beautiful and has the right to pursue beauty. People like to see beautiful things everyday. Life is short and artificial beauty can make it happier for those who have physical defects. I just hope everyone doesn't start looking the same.

I really admire Hao Lulu for her courage in revealing her experience in cosmetic surgery publicly. I've seen her before and after photos, and there is really an obvious contrast. If my girlfriend would like to have such surgery, I would definitely support her. If, after getting married, I found my wife had had cosmetic surgery, I would calmly accept it and probably praise the high level of cosmetic surgery craft.

Yu Qiaoli, a Sichuan woman who had cosmetic surgery

My motive is pure. I just want to be more beautiful. Actually, I've dreamt of operating on my nose for many years as it was never beautiful. I don't think I will necessarily be able to get a better job just because I'm more beautiful after the surgery. Perhaps I'll change my job in the future, but not because I've had my nose fixed.

Chen Huanran, an expert in cosmetic surgery from Chinese Academy of Medical Sciences

Artificial materials used for breast and nose implants could cause problems in future. They might not be safe, even if they are imported materials. So I think people had better not get cosmetic surgery unless there is great need. One of my tasks in my daily work is to persuade many of the people coming in for cosmetic surgery to go back home.

Wang Hai, a student in The Central Academy of Drama

Hao says that now she's become more beautiful she wants to become an actress. Well, there are already plenty of beauties here in our academy, but not all of them can succeed. I don't think it is worth spending so much money to make a certain face, and I don't like an artificial face.

Xie Wei, a professor at the Beijing Film Academy

This doesn't mean Hao will be able to enter the circle of film and TV. Directors may have con-



I'd like to look like her.

Photo by Zhang Tao

cerns, thinking, "If I invite Hao to act in my film, will the audience pay more attention to my film or Hao's cosmetic surgery?" Even if Hao realizes her dream, people will pay more attention to the changes in her, and it will limit her self-development.

Gu Chongqing, male, works for an IT company

It's understandable if a woman with an obvious defect looks to get cosmetic surgery, but it's not so good if many parts of her body are artificial. I like beauties, but I wouldn't marry an artificial woman.

Lisa, CNN resident reporter in Beijing

Hao's brave behavior lets more people know about the changes in modern Chinese females. In the past, Chinese girls were always considered conservative, but now they're seen as more fashionable.

Quan Zhenxi, a female Korean student at Remin University

I wouldn't have surgery, even if I wasn't beautiful. And not many women in my country would either. In our culture, one's physical body is given naturally by our parents, and can never be changed. If you change it, that shows lack of respect. You are fine just as you are. What you should do to become more beautiful is to improve the inside of yourself, not the outside.

Rachel Morris, American student at Beijing Language and Culture University

Why would someone want to have double eyelids and a high nose, just like westerners? What's wrong with single eyelids? A race should keep its characteristics, and not follow others. The importance is in being yourself. Beauty is not in having perfect features, but in being unique.

By Wang Fang

As the nation's political, economic and cultural center, people usually think the general level of security and safety in Beijing is pretty high. A survey into just how safe people considered their local neighborhood to be was conducted by Beijing Security Integrated Assessment Mission Group and was published in *Beijing Daily* last month in summer 2002, covering various different communities in Chaoyang, Xicheng and Shunyi District.

We think it's safer now

The survey shows that 23% and 46% residents believe that their neighborhood is "very safe" and "safe". Only 5% and 1% thought their neighborhood was "not safe" or "dangerous". Another 26% said the level of safety was "so-so".

Compared with the results of the "National Public Security Survey" and "Sense of Security During the Social System Transition Period", both implemented in 1998 by the Ministry of Public Security, more people checked the "very safe" and "safe" categories. And less people think it is "not safe" or "dangerous".

One time-honored measure is whether people think it's safe to go out at night. In 1998, the percentage of people who worried about going out after dark was 82%. But according to the new survey, the percentage of people who are happy to go out at night in their local neighborhood is 73%. Admittedly, only 49% felt safe further afield in Beijing at night, but the overall feeling was that nocturnal perambulations are safer these days.

However, it seems that Beijing residents are more suspicious about strangers than they were in 1998. In the previous survey, 47% said they felt threatened by strangers. In the present survey, when asked "whether you would open the door to a stranger", 78% said no. As to the question "whether you would talk to a stranger", only 58% said yes. It demonstrates the negative side of personal relationships in such a rapidly growing metropolis.

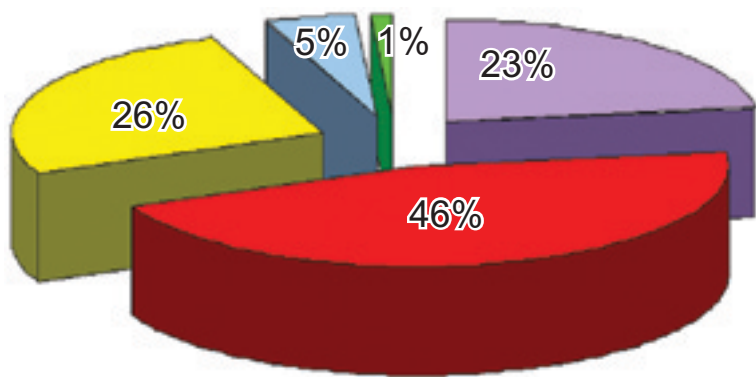
Neighborhood safety

The survey shows that people's overall feeling about safety in Beijing relates closely to how safe they think their own community is.

People are more likely to be afraid of being victims of crime if they lack confidence in the safety of their own neighborhood. In the "very safe" and "safe" neighborhoods, 22% and 31% of residents fear they may become victims of crime. In the "not safe" and "dangerous" neighborhoods, 67% and 75% are afraid of being hurt or robbed. At the same time, the survey also indicates that if there have been previous criminal cases in a

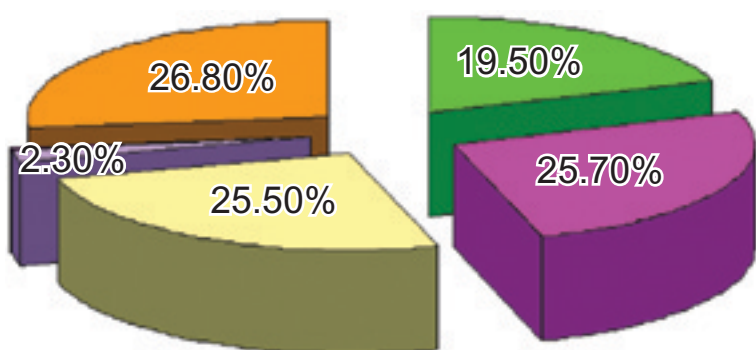
Lock Those Doors

Do you think the neighborhood is safe?



very safe 26% safe 46% so-so 23% not safe 5% dangerous 1%

Relations between police and residents



very good 26.80% good 25.50% so-so 19.50% bad 2.30% no answer (0.20% said very bad)

neighborhood, it strongly influences residents' sense of security. In neighborhoods where a crime has taken place, 67% of its residents were worried about becoming victims; in neighborhoods where no crime has recently taken place, only 31% have the same worry.

Among 72 criminal cases mentioned by residents in the survey, property violence takes the majority with 57 mentions. Respondents only mentioned seven cases of criminal assault. It shows the most common safety concern is theft.

The survey also reveals that the type and management of the neighborhood relates to locals' sense of security. The quality of management of the neighborhood appears to be a big factor in this. If people have faith in the local neighborhood management authorities, they're far more likely to feel an overall sense of security.

Police in the eyes of local residents

The present survey demonstrates that visibility, efficiency of the police and their relationships with residents are important factors in the local sense of safety. Whether residents trust the police or not determines residents' behavior, such as whether to report something or cooperate with the police. The result of the survey shows that most residents are satisfied with the security of their neighborhood; however, some residents think the security guards in their neighborhoods are not reliable and they are not satisfied with the service and support provided by the police.

To the question of whether there are enough local security personnel, 51% said there were enough, 22% did not think so and the rest said they didn't know. Over 50% said they could see

the security personnel on patrol "usually"; 28% said "sometimes", and 18% people said they never saw any. When asked if the police can provide 24-hour instant service, 51% said yes, 6% said no, and 38% said "don't know".

In the recent survey, 14% said they once required instant service (for example, calling emergency number 110). Among them, 88% got instant service. The survey indicates that most callers got help in time from the police. As to the question of whether the police understood the situation in the neighborhood and could provide useful information, 70% said yes, 10% said no and the rest said "don't know".

Regarding relationships between the police and the residents, the general assessment of the police was fairly positive. Around 20% and 26% said "very good" and "good". Only 2% and less than 1% marked "bad" or "very bad". But one item deserving of attention is that 26% think the police are just "so-so" and that 27% did not respond to this question.

More than 40% said the police were "good-mannered", 29% thought their manners were "so-so" and 4% considered the cops "ill-mannered". Also, 60% believed the police had the support of the public while conducting their investigations; 1% did not think so, while 15% said it was hard to say. In answering what the duty of the police is, 47% said it was "preventing and investigating crimes and arresting criminals"; 31% said "maintaining social order". Other duties, like "mediating in disputes, providing instant service", were mentioned by few people.

Quite a few residents said they or their friends had once helped security personnel or had witnessed such cooperation. 43%

What do you think is the duty of the police and the residents

	duty of the police	residents should cooperate
preventing and investigating crimes and arresting criminals	56.40%	61.50%
maintaining social order, mediating in disputes,	60.80%	61.80%
providing instant service	15.00%	25.50%
others	2.50%	3.80%

said they would report something suspicious to the relevant authorities. Only 11% said they would not do anything.

If there were a sudden incident, only 7% residents said they would try to "solve it by themselves", compared with 54% saying they would "report it to the police". 4% said they would do nothing.

The survey shows the importance of a security presence in determining levels of safety. The suggestion is that residents are like children who feel safe if their parents are around. Therefore, the visibility of the local police and that of security guards is the core measurement of residents' sense of security.

What needs to be done?

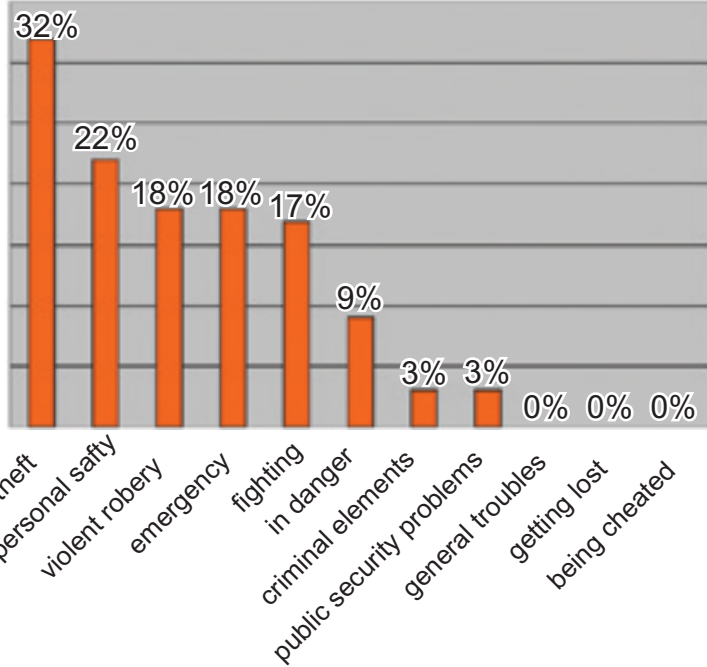
Li Qiang, the director of Tsinghua University Center for the Study of Contemporary China, points out that part of the reason residents lack confidence in their neighborhood security is the fact that management of these com-

munities is not consistent. Some have security guards, some don't. Some have particular ways of dealing with potential problems. He says the results of the survey show that the government should make an effort to standardize neighborhood management.

"Most residents think the police are only in charge of criminal assaults, not civil infringements," he said. Li feels there needs to be a clear role for the neighborhood management authorities, and how they interact with the police.

Li says the management of neighborhoods in China is undergoing unprecedented reform and responsibility for security has moved from work units to society. At present, it seems to be a trend for neighborhoods to organize their own security guards, even though this isn't necessarily an ideal solution. "It is an important task to build up a unified local security system," Li added.

What will make you ask the police for help



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By Zhao Hongyi

Guiyu used to be a pleasant seaside village, just an hour's drive from Shantou in Guangdong Province. Before 1995, it had less than 1,000 residents and fishing and rice planting were the main local industries. But in recent years, the village has become the center of a new industry: disposal of millions of tons of electronic waste. Now, Guiyu is home to hundreds of thousands of migrant workers who are busily smashing up used TVs, fridges, phones, computers and photocopy machines.

They also use industrial acids to extract valuable materials, for instance metals like platinum and silver, used in the construction of many of these products. This just adds to the pollution nightmare: toxic liquids from the whole disposal process are often flagrantly discharged into nearby rivers and lakes. The reason the stuff is being disposed of is so that it can be recycled into new equipment.

"They are using the methods of the 17th century to dispose of the waste of the 21st century," complained Lai Yun, toxic projects director for Greenpeace China in Beijing. Lai has visited Guiyu more than ten times this year.

Toxic impact

Lai has conducted a study, which was released in Beijing last month, into the effects of this industry on the local environment. The content of potentially deadly chemicals like barium in the river near the small village is 10 times higher than the maximum acceptable level required by the Environment Protection Agency of the US. The content of tin is 152 times the highest level allowed in the US, while the level of chromium is 1338 times higher and that of zinc is 212 times higher.

Sure enough, this pollution is already affecting the health of local residents. Unusual respiratory problems have been noticed in 80% of the local children and skin ulcers have become common among the migrant workers, who are earning less than 20 yuan a day.

Each computer contains roughly 700 chemicals, half of which are harmful to human beings, according to a report by the State Environment Protection Administration (SEPA) of China.

"Electronic waste causes a wide range of serious damage to the environment and humans, particularly from chemicals like zinc, cadmium and ungradable plastics," says Hu Xiuren, professor of environmental science and technology at Tsinghua University.

A growing industry

"What's happening in Guiyu is only the tip of the iceberg,"

Foreign Waste Piling Up in China



A local person in Guiyu village suffering from respiratory problems

Photos by photocom

says Liang Congjie, founder and chairman of "Friends of Nature", an environment protection NGO in Beijing.

Along the country's coastal areas, effluent from electronic waste is washing around the shores of ports like Nanhai and Huangpu in Guangdong, Xiamen in Fujian, Wenzhou and Taizhou in Zhejiang, Lianyungang in Jiangsu, and ports in Shanghai, Shandong and Tianjin. There are major wastes disposal centers at Huangye near Tianjin, Taizhou and Wenzhou in Zhejiang, Dali in Hainan, and Longtang and Guiyu in Guangdong. The type of waste being disposed of has also increased. In the mid 1990s it was mainly computers and monitors, but now it includes mobile phones, batteries, refrigerators and TV sets.

It's supposed to be illegal in China, but the waste disposal business is so profitable if done with a few enough safety procedures that a complete business chain is operating actively nationwide, from importing the waste under various names in order to escape customs' inspection and fines, to disposing, reassembling and extracting metals. An underground trade selling reassembled computers and copiers has also sprung up.

Part of the lure of the trade is that it is cheap to use simple and dangerous methods to extract metals like copper, tin and zinc. But the main area of profit is the reassembling of personal computers. Most of the disposal sites purchase piles of used computers for around 10,000 yuan per ton. They then reassemble them into second-hand

computers and pass them off as famous-brand models that can be sold for a reasonable price, as much as 1,000 yuan per computer.

Where is it coming from?

Part of the reason for this local boom is that the countries that produce the waste have laws too strict for them to be able to dispose of it cheaply. So they send it overseas. Lai Yun of Greenpeace China told the media in Beijing last week that, according to her investigations, most of the waste comes from the US, Japan and South Korea.

Lai found that of the total electronic waste produced around the world, 80% goes to Asia for disposal. Of this, 90% comes to China. "We cannot make China the 'world rubbish mill' when we are trying to turn it into a 'world manufactur-



All the way from America



A warehouse full of waste

ing mill," Lai appealed.

"Multimedia", an IT industry magazine warned in a recent article that the quantity of electronic waste is increasing by a rate of 18% annually worldwide.

The US is the largest electronic products producer and consumer. It produces 5-7 million tons of electronic waste each year, including about 20 million computers.

"In the US and Japan, there are strict laws guarding against damage to the environment from waste disposal," explained Hu Xiuren from Tsinghua University. "The average cost of disposal for each ton of electronic waste in the US is \$2,000." But if they export the waste to developing countries they can make some money from the export, although not much.

"This explains why the US has been refusing to sign the UN's 'Basel Convention' which prevents trans-boundary movement of hazardous waste," says Lai Yun. China joined the convention in March, 1990.

Laws ignored

In 2000, the General Administration of Customs, together with the SEPA and the State Bureau for Import & Export Commodities Inspection issued a binding regulation banning the import of electronic waste.

Local governments were also ordered to take steps to clamp down on the business. Lu Ruihua, governor of Guangdong Province appealed to the provincial congress to make provincial laws and regulations to help supervise and control the inflow of electronic waste. The governor also appealed for "developed countries to stop exporting the waste."

But the various laws and regulations have not proved too successful so far. Indeed the industry seems to be growing.

Xu Dansong, a senior researcher at the Chinese Academy of International Trade and Economic Cooperation, said that China's customs should reinforce their supervision of imported commodities.

A new campaign to crack down on smuggling of electronic waste was launched in the middle of last year. On December 16, 2002, 339 tons of electronic waste was found in 28 containers at Lianyungang, a port city in Jiangsu Province. The waste was later shipped back to South Korea where it had come from.

In January this year, Fanyu Customs in Guangdong found 18 containers with 400 tons of used computers, printers, TV sets and copiers, all intended for disposal.

In June this year, Ningbo Customs in Zhejiang found 128 tons of electronic waste. But the problem still exists and the business is still expanding.

Alternative efforts

The electronic waste produced domestically is also a big part of

the problem, especially as it's on the increase.

Statistics show that China has 370 million TV sets, 150 million refrigerators and 190 million washing machines currently in use.

"At the moment there are at least five million TV sets, four million refrigerators, six million washing machines, five million computers and tens of millions of mobile phones being discarded each year," said Pan Yuansheng, deputy director of the general pollution control unit of SEPA.

Therefore, developing a safe, scientific and environmentally friendly means of disposal appears ever more urgent.

"Electronic waste is a resource that can be recycled and used if we handle it properly," said Mao Rubai, deputy of the Environment and Resources Committee of the National People's Congress earlier this year at the legislative body's annual meeting in Beijing.

Some experiments in careful disposal of electronic waste have already begun. Chongqing municipality started the construction of four disposal units for dangerous forms of waste, including the electronic variety, in October this year. Wuxi, in Jiangsu Province, also begun construction of a professional electronic waste disposal unit on September 22. Its disposal capability is estimated at 30,000 tons each year.

Further measures needed

"We should encourage producers to take up responsibility for the recycling," says Zhang Kunming, advisor to the administrator of SEPA.

Zhang believes that as recycling can be profitable, producers should be encouraged to get involved in the business. Zhang also called on producers to use non-hazardous chemicals in manufacturing.

The European Union has an act called the "Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR)", which requires electronic product producers to take responsibility for the environmental effects of their products throughout the entire product life cycle - including disposal and recycling.

Chen Meiping, project manager of Greenpeace China supports such regulations, saying "only in this way can we force the producers to use harmless materials that are easy to recycle in their production."

Pan Yue, SEPA deputy director for pollution control, revealed at a public environment protection campaign on November 30 that his administration is drafting regulations similar to the EU's EPR clause.

"These requirements will present both technological challenges and business opportunities for enterprises," Pan said.

By Sun Ming

A newspaper reporter convicted of racketeering, embezzlement and illegal possession of guns was sentenced to 19 years in prison last Friday in Loudi, Hubei Province.

Wu Xinyong, 41, was once a reporter from *Loudi Daily*, an influential newspaper in Loudi. He mainly covered events in the fields of politics and law in the city.

According to the prosecution, however, between 1995 and 2002, Wu conned various people out of 1,060,000 yuan, after promising to help them in various ways. He also cooperated with an official to embezzle 2,380,000 yuan from Loudi Finance Bureau.

Use those contacts

"Fortunately, I did nothing for him, otherwise, I would have got into trouble," Du Mingyuan, the former Mayor of Changsha, capital of Hubei Province, told *Southern Daily*, a Guangzhou-based newspaper, in September this year.

Wu once invited Du to dinner in 1999 and one of Wu's friends also accompanied him. Du, who was the Mayor of Changsha at that time, had got to know Wu after being interviewed by him.

To Du's surprise, Wu told his friend at the dinner that Du was his adoptive father. "I was very surprised, but I didn't deny it, to avoid causing embarrassment," said Du. But Wu didn't reveal the identity of his friend to Du.

"I didn't understand why he invited me for a dinner with his friend until three years' later." In February 2002, Du received a let-

Journalist Sentenced

ter from the friend.

The man was called Yin Jianbin and he told Du that he was the manager of Huanghua Construction Company in Changsha. He said Wu had promised to help him get some profitable contracts with the help of his "adoptive father". Between 1999 and 2001, Wu had asked for 340,000 yuan in total from Yin, claiming he needed the money to bribe Du.

Du did not help Yin gain any contracts. Instead, after receiving the letter, Du advised Yin to report the case to the police as soon as possible. On April 27 2002, Wu was arrested by the Changsha Public Security Bureau.

It turned out Yin was not the only one to be conned by Wu. According to Loudi Procuratorate, early in February 1995, Wu told the same lie he told Yin to Huang Donglian, the boss of a small private construction company.

Wu even told Huang that he had a tape which could prove that Du was having an affair with a young lady. Wu got around 800,000 yuan in total from Huang. Huang didn't realize that he had been cheated until Wu was arrested.

Rip off the financial department

According to Loudi Procuratorate, in 1997, Wu became involved with a hotel project in Changsha. Wu asked Zhu Tongqiu, the section chief of Loudi Financial Bureau to invest in the



Wu Xinyong

project. Zhu embezzled 2,380,000 yuan in total from his bureau in 1997 and 1998 and invested the money in Wu's project. As a reward, Wu invited Zhu's younger brother to join the project.

Make friends with police and criminals

In 1994, Wu got to know a leader of Loudi Public Security Bureau and they soon became good friends. With the help of the leader, whose name wasn't released by police, Wu got three pistols and some bullets.

Wu said in court that it's not so unusual for a reporter to carry a pistol. But one of his friends told *Changsha Daily* last Friday that Wu just wanted to scare people.

Wu often wrote favorable stories about policemen, so he was quite popular among policemen in Loudi.

And thanks to his good relations with the police, Wu got to

know a number of criminals. Liu Liwen, the head of a local gang, said in the court last month that Wu was, in effect, one of the leaders of the gang.

"With his help, we were always able to get released easily," said Liu who is now serving life imprisonment.

Unqualified reporter

In Wu's colleagues' eyes, Wu is not a qualified reporter. Having graduated merely from high school, he became a clerk in the Advertising Department of Loudi Daily in 1991. Two years later, he became the manager of the department.

"In some people's eyes, he is a buffoon in the political field; in some other people's eyes, he is a master at creating and grasping opportunities. But all people who know him admit that he is a clever man," *Southern Daily* quoted one of his friends as saying on September 20 this year.

In 1994, to the surprise of his colleagues, Wu became a reporter for the newspaper. A source who declined to reveal his name told *Southern Daily* that Wu's promotion was thanks to a high official with Loudi Municipal Government.

"He is not a corrupt official. But you know, all people like to be flattered. The official is not an exception. Wu is just very good at doing this."

A Long Way from Spain



Ana's former life

By Shan Jinliang

Last weekend was a pretty typical one for Ana Herrera, a 29-year-old Spanish woman, and her husband Gary Cicero. They got up at 6:30 am and caught the 8:10 am train to Renqiu, Hebei Province. They were on their way to the St. Joseph Missionary Orphanage to help spread a bit of Christmas cheer.

It was a particularly short night's sleep this time as their day job, working for the Beijing branch of Spanish company China Export Partners (CEP), had kept them up until 2 am that day. But the long hours of the job mean that the only time the couple can maintain their commitment to helping Chinese orphans is at the weekend.

The couple came to China in 1999 as the first group of the EU-China Junior Managers Training Program (JMTP). Through friends, they got to know about the great many orphans in China, and the often dire conditions they lived in. So they began efforts to raise money to help the children, disabled orphans in particular, hoping to provide educational facilities and even help some get adopted by Chinese families.

Ana's young life was about as far from that of an orphan in China as it's possible to imagine. Born in the Canary Islands, near Spain, she always led an active life, practicing ballet for 15 years, playing many sports and eventually becoming a part-time model. Her blond hair, blue eyes, and radiant smile led to television ads and numerous print advertisements. Her modeling fees helped pay for her university studies and she eventually graduated in 1994 with a degree in law. While most of her classmates were keen on joining prestigious law firms, Ana's interests lay neither with law firms nor the catwalk.

She decided to pursue her dream of coming to China, to learn the language and watch the country develop. She applied to JMTP and was awarded a place in the program. She came to Beijing on February 29, 1999.

A visit changes her life

Shortly after beginning her studies at the Beijing Foreign Studies University, Ana met a priest named Father Xavier Zhang who told her about Claudio Didero, an Italian missionary who was teaching at a foster home in rural Beijing. Ana visited the foster home and was greatly impressed by Didero's devotion to helping the Chinese orphans while leading a very austere and simple life himself. She felt inspired to try and do what she could as well.

Later that year, she and her colleagues on the program organized a small charity and raised 20,000 yuan for the foster home.

Ana also began travelling to different orphanages in Beijing,

'The further you get from Beijing, the worse the orphanages are. Who is going to care for them?'
— Ana Herrera

Hebei and Shanghai. One of her trips to Renqiu in Hebei, left a particularly profound impression. She saw a long line of children at the gate of the orphanage when she arrived. "They greeted me in Spanish, saying 'Hola, Bienvenidos,'" says Ana, "which means 'Hello and welcome'." They held my hand and invited me to see their rooms." One girl even gave her a big apple. "They were generous and warm," says Ana.

Shocking visits

At the same time, she was shocked at the difficult living conditions of the orphans. Many of the orphaned kids she saw were suffering malnutrition, eating mainly rice or steamed bread, with little meat or vegetables. Many of the orphanages did not have heating systems, making them freezing during winter, and such amenities as a washing machine



Visiting an orphan at Beijing University No. 1 Affiliated Hospital.

Photo by Tony Shaw

were uncommon luxuries. A more pressing problem was the many cases in which orphanages had no funds to help children with severe, and sometimes life-threatening medical conditions.

Ana admits that initially she was a little nervous of some of the kids who were disabled or who had mental problems. But eventually she discovered the joy of communicating with them, even though it was often hard.

"Some of them are really clever, but it's hard for them

to be understood because they cannot respond to the outside world normally," she says. The one thing these kids really need, she says, is the warmth of human contact, to touch and play with others. She mentioned how some of the orphans would give an innocent smile if she shook their hand.

Asked where she finds the determination to give up her time to help in these often forbidding circumstances, she replies simply that these children need help. "The best way to feel love for these orphans is to put yourself in their shoes," says Ana. "You will feel how much they need love. They have no parents, they have no friends or relatives, they have nothing."

Helping a new life

Thinking of her schooldays in Spain when she and her schoolmates were sometimes taken to a local orphanage to meet and play with the children, Ana decided to try and help Chinese orphans in a practical way. There were simply too many of them for her personal donations to go very far, so she decided to organize a charity fund-raising event.

She and Gary as well as a few JMTP alumni organized the first Annual Corporate Gala Dinner in Beijing for the benefit of orphaned children in China in May 2001. Over 250,000 yuan was raised. At the second charity dinner in October 2003, over 500,000 yuan was raised, with support from companies like Nokia and Bayer.

Ana was determined to keep a close eye on how the money was distributed and spent. This was how she got into the habit of visiting orphanages on her weekends. Renqiu in Hebei is one of the nearest. "The further you get from Beijing, the worse the orphanages are," says Ana. "Who is going to care for them?"

Two successes

In the visit to Renqiu orphanage last Saturday, Ana and Gary brought two big bags of small Christmas gifts.

Among the roughly 60 children in the orphanage, Ruo Meilan and Ruo Fangfang are two of Ana's favorites. Ruo Meilan was abandoned at birth in November last year after it emerged she had a serious heart condition. An operation to cure her would cost 40,000 yuan. Hao Shenhua, chief of the Renqiu orphanage called Ana to see if she could help in raising the money needed, but all the money raised from the charity dinner in October 2002 had already been designated to help other orphans.

So Ana started contacting foreign agencies specialising in helping children to see if she could raise the money. The response was swift and within a couple of months, Ana had raised enough money for Ruo Meilan's operation. Shortly afterwards, Ruo was adopted by a local family.

Ruo Fangfang, has also come a long way since Ana first met her. She was born with no legs, but she always tried to move around as best as she could. "She was always happy," says Ana. Ana helped raise money to pay for new prosthetic legs for Ruo and now she's able to walk as a result. "It's amazing to see the difference. Last year she was crawling on the floor. Now, not only can she walk but she can even dance!" Ana says with her infectious smile.

Ana told *Beijing Today* she's thinking of adopting one of these children herself, but she's concerned about the difficulties of the process. "The whole adoption process would take one or two years or even longer. It's hard to obtain approval from the China Center of Adoption Affairs," she says.

Aches and achievements

Ana's devotion to her cause in

China has occasionally had its price. Her brother was tragically killed in a car accident in Spain in November last year, and it was a month before Ana was able to go home to be with her family. In the past two years, she's had barely any time to go back home.

When China Central Television asked her to be a translator on a new Spanish channel two weeks ago, she asked if she could host a program instead. She's hoping to draw more media attention to China's abandoned children. She's also hoping to persuade more people to give their own help to the orphanages.

"We need more volunteers," says Ana. "We need donations or goods such as diapers, washing machines and any daily-use products for the orphanages." She suggests foreigners in Beijing could donate their used family articles to the orphanages when they leave the country.

Now Ana is planning a new charity event in 2004. She helps with all kinds of orphan assistant programs and on Monday she visited six orphans who had just had operations in Beijing University No.1 Affiliated Hospital. She left her mobile phone number to a caretaker in case they needed to contact her.

"Every time they call me for help, I cannot refuse," says Ana. "If everyone can help a little it all adds up to make a huge difference in these young lives," she adds.

Ana and various other international organizations dedicated to helping orphans in Beijing established the International Orphans Council Beijing (IOCB) last week. If you would like to help orphans but don't know how, you can contact one of these organizations at www.iocb.org.



Playing with Ruo Meilan.



Ruo Fangfang (center) on her new legs.

Photos by Gary

Temple of Heaven



Summer Resort of Chengde, Hebei Province



Leis, Outstanding Architects of Ancient Buildings

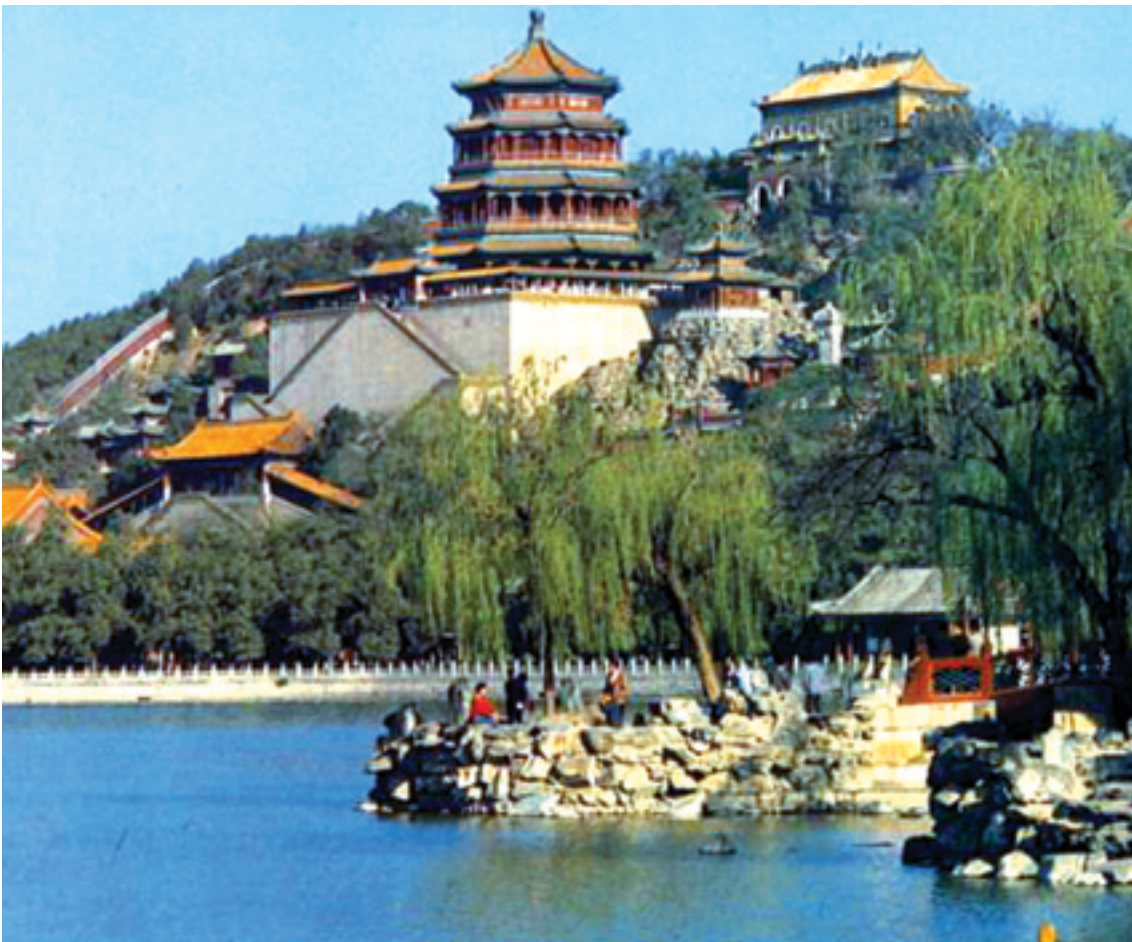
By Zhang Huan

Few people may realize that 2003 is the 850th anniversary of Beijing as China's capital city. Since its founding in 1153, Beijing has seen successive dynasties raising innumerable splendid structures. The Leis, a well-known architectural family of the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911), is notable for its productivity and longevity. The Lei family got their nickname after heading Model House (or the Imperial Construction Department) for seven generations.

For over 200 years, the Leis have devoted themselves to the design and construction of imperial buildings. Their work reads like a list of the must-see's in Beijing: the Forbidden City, the Temple of Heaven, the Summer Palace, the Summer Resort of Chengde as well as both Western and Eastern Qing Tombs (all of which are U.N. World Heritage Sites).

Chronology

Lei Fada, the first generation of the Leis, arrived in Beijing early in the Qing Dynasty in response to a call for good architectural craftsmen. He was later appointed by the Emperor Kangxi to lead the construction department. Architecture was then a hereditary profession, so Lei Fada's son Lei Jinyu inherited his father's position. When Emperor Kangxi decided to build a new imperial garden, Changchunyuan, Lei Jinyu was entrusted with the work involving nanmu, an expensive wood selected



Foxiangge, Summer Palace

Photos by Photocom / Xie Mincong

as construction material. The work so demonstrated Lei's outstanding skills that the emperor conferred upon him the official title of the seventh rank.

By the fourth generation, the reputation of the Lei Family had spread far and wide. Lei Jiayi and his two brothers were fortunate to work during the construction boom under the reigns of the Emperor Qianlong and Emperor Jiaqing. They created the imperial gardens in today's Haidian District and extended the Summer Resort of Chengde. The construction of Ningshou Palace, also known as the Garden of Emperor Qianlong, won Lei Jiayi high regard. The garden, featuring thoughtfully placed halls and pavilions with covered corridors zigzagging between the rockeries, was deeply enjoyed by the emperor. In the 57th year of Qianlong, Lei Jiayi was entrusted with the construction and extension of

Qingyi Garden on the Longevity Hill (Wanshou Hill).

Fifth-generation Lei Jingxiu is best known for his creation of the Ding Mausoleum (Dingling). Finished by his son Lei Siqi, the Mausoleum won him an award of official title of the 5th rank. During Emperor Tongzhi's reign, the Qing government decided to reconstruct Yuanmingyuan for which Lei Siqi created many construction drafts. Although it remained uncompleted, Lei's thousands of drafts were preserved to become a valuable archive for both Yuanmingyuan and Qing Dynasty architecture.

Lei Tingchang, the seventh generation, designed and built mausoleums for the empresses and the imperial concubines including Hui and Chong Mausoleums (Huiling and Chongling).

The Summer Palace

The Summer Palace, the signature

work of the Leis, was originally named Qingyi Garden (including Longevity Hill and Kunming Lake). Emperor Qianlong initiated the project in 1750 to celebrate his mother's 60th birthday. The project then expanded to include Wisdom Sea (Zhihuihai), the Long Gallery, and Huishan Garden. An additional three small hills were constructed on the banks of Kunming Lake in accordance with the three myths about the mountains Fangzhang, Penglai and Yingzhou. In 1755, the Stone Boat (a boat-shaped pavilion in stone) was constructed.

Valuable Resource

The Leis left not only the physical treasures of their beautiful buildings but also a vast archive of design drafts. Over 20,000 construction drafts feature in the collection of the National Library of China, including projection, front view/ side view and rotary drawings. The most uncommon drafts feature contour maps showing the tops of the irregularly-shaped mausoleums. For the fitful construction of the Hui Mausoleum (Huiling), the Leis left detailed drafts recording each construction step, wood structure size and the exact number of stakes under archways and tablet pavilions. For their progress reports to the government, the Leis also produced many worksite drawings which detailed: site selection, earth excavation, foundation construction, underground palace construction, roof beams setting and tile making.

Since the Leis arrived in Beijing, all seven generations have lived in Haidian District. In Jushan village, Haidian District, one can still find the ancestral grave of the Lei family.



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By Wang Chunzhu / Yu Shanshan

When Hong Kong director Andrew Lau and script-writer Alan Mak started to shoot the film *Infernal Affairs* in 2001, neither had any idea it would go on to be a box office smash, to say nothing of spawning parts two and three. The *Infernal Affairs* phenomena reached its zenith on December 11 this year, when the third installment in the series was released simultaneously at cinemas in Hong Kong and all around the mainland.

In the fall of 2002, the Hong Kong's film industry was reeling from a terrible descent from its heyday in the 1980s and early '90s. Between 1993 and 2001, the number of films produced in the SAR annually fell from 242 to 126, while yearly box office sales dropped from US\$227 million to US\$103 million.

When it was released in December 2002, *Infernal Affairs* (Wu-jiandao) quickly was adopted as a symbol that despite its troubles, Hong Kong cinema was far from dead. The film was the biggest hit of the year, raking in over US\$50 million at the box office and become a highly sought-after VCD/DVD release soon after.

The movie also touched off a bidding war in late January among such major Hollywood studios as DreamWorks, Paramount and Columbia. In the end, Warner Brothers shelled out US\$1.75 million for the rights to remake the film, the American version of which will be produced by actor Brad Pitt.

"At the beginning, all I was concerned about was making *Infernal Affairs* an excellent film. I never expected there would be *Infernal Affairs II* and *III*," star Andrew Lau told the *Beijing News* last Monday.

The shooting and production of *Infernal Affairs II*, actually a prequel to the first movie, and *III*, which follows a complicated double timeline covering events before and after the first story, were wrapped up very quickly. Knowing that audience interest was peaked by the original film, the producers shot for even greater success.

Key to higher box office returns was the mainland market and the producers of the third film calculated their overall campaign carefully. Following a tidal wave of media promotion, *Infernal Affairs III* premiered at a gala event at the Great Hall of the People on Tian'anmen Square on December 8. "Beijing was chosen as the site for the *Infernal Affairs III* premiere because it's natural to focus on China," said Y.C. Chu, deputy general manager of Media Asia Films, the film's production company. "This move essentially expands the market for Hong Kong movies."

Infernal Affairs - Savior of Hong Kong Cinema?

The strategy has paid off, as nearly all the presale tickets to the premier screening quickly sold out.

According to director Lau, the third installment should be the last in the series. "But it's not impossible there might be more," he said. "The spirit of *Infernal Affairs* could continue."

Despite the media frenzy around the later films, reviews and audience reaction have been mixed. Many viewers had lukewarm feelings about the second film and the third has proven more controversial, supporters calling it a landmark, its critics attacking its confusing plot line and many characters. Many critics fault the stunning speed in which the trilogy was made, just one year, is a reason for the fall in quality.

Moreover, the first film reached a logical, satisfying conclusion, making it difficult for

the story to be continued in the third installment.

"Why was *Infernal Affairs III* shot so roughly that we struggle to believe we were ever excited about the first one? Was Andrew Lau under too much market pressure?" Gu Yu, editor of the *Beijing News*, wrote in a critique last Saturday that targeted the "short-sightedness of Hong Kong filmmakers".

How long *Infernal Affairs* fever will run remains a question. After seeing the premiere of part three, Wang Lei, a critic for Sina.com, said, "This trilogy is simply a commercial success, it is no *Godfather*."

Whatever its place in cinematic history, even Lau has accepted that while the *Infernal Affairs* trilogy is a milestone in Hong Kong filmmaking, it is definitely not its savior. "Hong Kong movies cannot be rescued by just one or two films," he said.



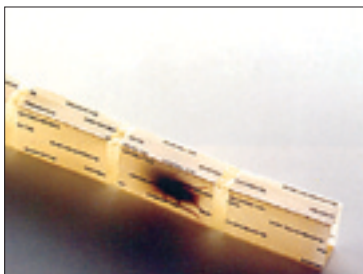
The eagerly-awaited film *Infernal Affairs III* was simultaneously released in Hong Kong and the Chinese mainland, including this packed theater in Hangzhou.



Paper lights by interior designer Tokujin Yoshioka



Adult disposable nappies by fashion designer Kosuke Tsumura



Cockroach trap by architect Kengo Kuma



Anniversary matches by lighting designer Kaoru Mende

Inspired Simplicity

By Yu Shanshan

Who says innovative design should only be applied to high-tech or high-end products? In 2000, Japanese graphic designer Hara Kenya decided to see what out-of-the-box thinking could do for everyday small household commodities. Towards that aim, he invited 32 leading Japanese artists from the design, architecture, photography and writing fields to creatively rethink items most of us take for granted.

Most of the resulting products were produced by Takeo Company, a Tokyo-based paper manufacturer, and actually made of paper. The interesting, challenging and surprisingly thoughtful designs have since toured the world since 2000 in a show called Re-Design: Daily Products of the 21st Century. This year, this innovative exhibition has made a splash on the Chinese mainland at shows in Shanghai, Shenzhen and now Beijing.

Many of the ideas are so simple and intuitive that people will wonder why the products were not originally made that way. Two prime examples are a cigarette pack and CD case that greet visitors from the first display in the exhibition hall at the Central Academy of Fine Arts.

The cigarette pack, designed by advertising art director Takuya Onuki, is intended for people forced to smoke outside by rules and regulations, or simple

courtesy. Integrated into the pack is a small fold-out ashtray, there in case there are no proper ash receptacles available. Shigeru Uchida's paper CD holder has a well-placed hook attached that allows CDs to be hung up for compact, fun storage.

Such convenience was not the aim of all the re-designs. In fact, architect Shigeru Ban came up with a strange roll of toilet paper meant precisely to inhibit easy, wasteful rolling and use. The key is the squared-shaped cardboard tube at the center of the roll.

According to the introductory statement Ban wrote for the product, "This could be a simple way to reduce waste. The paper does not pull smoothly, and the holder also generates resistance, so users cannot take off too much paper at one time. Furthermore, a square-shaped product would be easier and less expensive to package and transport because there would be no gaps between rolls."

Kaoru Mende shows less practical and more aesthetic concerns in his box of anniversary matches based on real natural twigs. Graphic designer and typography expert Takaaki Bando worked on taxi receipts, giving them a yellow shade and rearranging the order of figures.

Far more garish is the work of interactive media graphics designer Gento Matsumoto, who apparently though male bowlers needed more stimulation while

enjoying a game. He came up with a racy series of computerized bowling scoring graphics that allow bowlers to see more and more of a woman in her underwear as their scores rise. "More strikes, more attention, you see?" he quipped in his introduction to the product.

In the preface to his book *Re-Design: Daily Products of the 21st Century*, published in 2000 at the same time that the first show was held in Tokyo, Hara Kenya wrote, "Although one might initially interpret this exercise as a contest to give commonplace items the wittiest, most stylish or most amusing makeovers, that could not be farther from the truth. Rather, the mission was to enable each creator to approach his theme in great earnestness and subject it to a genuine reevaluation."

To welcome the event, students of the Central Academy of Fine Arts (CAFA) presented 30 daily use commodities given similar revamping treatment, now exhibited at the back of the show.

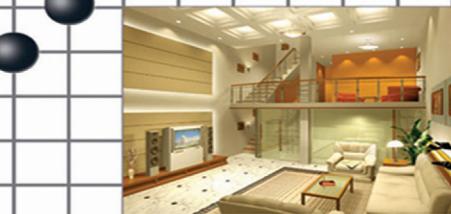
Ban Chengzhi's three section jointed ice cream stick can be removed in parts as eaters work their way down the bar, while Yu Haoyue came up with a toothbrush that contains toothpaste in its handle. Users simply have to squeeze to get some toothpaste on their brush.

"Although the students' works are simplistic, they carry the impressions of students' real life experiences, as well as their observations and thoughts about society," said Wang Min, dean of the CAFA's school of design.

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Music



Christmas Blessings

The Beijing Baroque Chamber Chorus, led by Nicholas Smith, presents holiday classics both baroque and contemporary including: Jingle Bells, Silent Night and Merry Christmas.

Where: Forbidden City Concert Hall, north of Tian'anmen Square in Zhongshan Park **When:** 7:30 pm, December 21 **Admission:** 50 - 380 yuan **Tel:** 6559 8285

Music Awards Ceremony

Over three hundred musicians will mingle in an

exciting evening of music awards. Sponsored by the Light Music Association of China, the Award Ceremony will feature both musical and media stars including: Qiao Yu, Xu Peidong, Liu Huan with Jay L.Cooper and Philip Burks joining from the USA.

Where: Capital Gymnasium, Baishiqiao Lu, Haidian District **When:** 7:30 pm, December 20 **Admission:** 80 - 1280 yuan **Tel:** 6831 3926

Ciampi Quartet
Since its founding 30 years ago, the Ciampi Quartet has played to appreciative audiences all over the world. Formed by four professors from the renowned Duke University, the Quartet has over ten CD's under their belt with a promise of an exciting evening of music.

Where: Forbidden City Concert Hall, north of Tian'anmen Square in Zhong-

shan Park **When:** 7:30 pm, December 19 **Admission:** 60 - 280 yuan **Tel:** 6559 8285

Gerard Schwarz Guest Conductor

The outstanding National Symphony Orchestra presents a diverse program under guest conductor Gerard Schwarz from the U.S. The evening's program will feature: Rimsky Korsakov's Capriccio Espagnol, Tchaikovsky's Violin Concerto and Shostakovich's Symphony No.5.

Where: National Library Concert Hall, Zhongguancun Nan Dajie 33, Haidian District **When:** 7:30 pm, December 20 **Admission:** 50 - 380 yuan **Tel:** 8854 5520



Movies



The Italian Job

A classic action/adventure film directed by F. Gary Gray, The Italian Job features a gang of thieves who successfully pull off a daring heist only to be betrayed by one of their own. You'll have to watch the film to see how they get him back.

Main actors: Mark Wahlberg, Charlize Theron, Edward Norton.

Where: Xindong'an Movie City, Wangfujing Street, Dongcheng District **When:** 9:30 am - 9:30 pm December 19 **Admission:** 40 yuan **Tel:** 6528 1988

Jams



Unplugged Night

Feixu, Meihao yaodian, Wanxiaoli, and blind singer Zhou Yunpeng join forces to open unplugged night. These big boys dance on stage and promise an evening of pure fun.

Where: Hao Yun, 300m east of the south gate of the University of International Business and Economics **When:** 9: 30 pm, December 19 **Admission:** 30 yuan **Tel:** 6429 9920

Stage

Drama Festival Performance



The Experimental Drama Festival featuring talents from Beijing, Hongkong and Taiwan continues with drama performances this month. Golden Bough Theatre presents She Is So Lovely from Dec. 17 - 21: Office 30 presents The Fireworks On The Other Side from Dec. 24 - 28.

Where: Bei Theatre, Beibingmasi Lane, Dongcheng District **When:** 7:30 pm **Admission:** 50 yuan **Tel:** 6406 0175

Swan Lake

The Russian National Theater presents this well-loved ballet classic with their world-famous artistry, technique and spirit. The company boasts 14 award-winning soloists, led by Artistic Director Vyacheslav Gordeyev.

Where: Bei Zhan Theater. Xizhimenwai Dajie 135, Xicheng District **When:** 7:30 pm, December 19 - 20 **Admission:** 120 - 500 yuan **Tel:** 6552 6603

Exhibitions



Mixed Media Contemporary Chinese Art

Ink, oil, watercolor, print and sculpture all feature in this diverse exhibition of innovative Chinese art. Featured artists include: Lengjun, Wu Jianping, Xinyi, Yikun and others.

Where: Fungung Art Gallery, 136 Nanchizi Dajie, Dongcheng District **When:** 9:00

am - 5:00 pm from December 12 to January 18, 2004 **Admission:** Free **Tel:** 6523 3320

National Geographic Retrospective
This photography show celebrates the 115th anniversary of National Geographic Magazine and the 25th anniversary of Sino-US relations. Of special note is the showcase featuring photos taken along Marco Polo's travel route, taken by a National Geographic veteran of over 20 years.

Where: 9A Fuxing Lu **When:** 9:00 am - 5:00 pm today to January 28, 2004 **Admission:** Free **Tel:** 6857 3281

Beijing Charm
To commemorate Beijing's 850th anniversary as the capital of China, the exhibit Ancient Capital features oil paintings from seven artists: Wang Guozhu, Zhai Peihong, Zhang Yong, Zhang Guoning, Zhao

Yao, Zhong Qingbin, Li Xiaoming. From the Forbidden City to Chinese courtyards and hutongs, the paintings celebrate the charm of this ancient capital.

Where: Fafa Gallery, No. 2, Xiangjiang Bei Lu, Chaoyang District **When:** 9:00 am to 10:00 pm, today to December 25 **Admission:** Free **Tel:** 8430 2587

Chinese Prints

This exhibit features internationally shown and collected woodcut, copperplate and stone plate prints. Woodcut artists include: Wang Hupo, Gao Rongsheng, Liang Dong, Song Yuan, Zheng Xu, Wang Huaxiang. The copperplate artists include Wang Weixin and Lintong with Wu Changjiang's stone plate works.

Where: Qin Gallery, 1-1E Hua-weili, north of Beijing Curio City **When:** 9:30am - 7pm from December 19 to December 31 **Admission:** Free **Tel:** 8779 0461



Songzhuang's Voice

One of Beijing's oldest artist communities presents

their recent works. The thirty plus works clearly show the passion motivating these artists, many of whom gave up a comfortable life and stable job in the city to pursue their life's love.

Where: North of Ren-zhuang Village, Songzhuang, Tongxian District **When:** till the end of December 2003 **Admission:** Free **Tel:** 6959 8343

Winter Show

The newly-opened China Art Season presents new works by eleven artists exploring a range of contemporary issues such as identity, gender and environment.

Where: China Art Seasons, No.2 Jiuxiangqiao Lu (Dashanzi), Chaoyang District **When:** 11: 00 am - 7: 00 pm from Tuesday to Sunday (closed on Mondays and Public Holidays) **Admission:** Free **Tel:** 6431 1900

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By Joel Kirkhart

Christmas has become a truly global holiday — just look at all the lights, Santas and trees around Beijing and it's clear that the holiday has taken on in a big way in this town. At the same time, nearly every country that observes Christmas has its own ways of doing so, particularly when it comes to eating.

For many **British** families, the feast on Christmas day is a sumptuous early dinner, normally based on roast goose or turkey, after which comes the most famous English holiday treat, plum (or Christmas) pudding. This is a dense steamed cake soaked in brandy and often served aflame, then topped with a sweet, buttery, brandy-laced hard sauce.



Traditional English plum pudding

In **France**, holiday fare differs by region, as people in Burgundy traditionally serve roast turkey with truffles, while oysters are essential around Paris. A beautiful dessert popular around the country is *bûche de Noël*, a rolled, frosted cake dusted with cocoa powder.

Germany is the source of many Christmas traditions, including Christmas trees, gingerbread houses and many popular holiday cookies (see following recipes). Typical German Christmas feasts center around roast stuffed goose or roast hare, inevitably served with potatoes in some form. A popular treat is *stollen*, a rich sweet bread filled with candied fruit or marzipan.

As the actual birthplace of Santa Claus, first known as Saint Nikolaos, it is not surprising that the **Greeks** have rich holiday culinary traditions. Turkey has reportedly become common on many tables, but so are more traditional dishes such as *kristopsomo* and *vasilopeta*, two rich, soft sweet breads served on Christmas day and New Year's Day.

In **Italy**, Christmas tradition calls for a meatless meal of seven (or more) seafood dishes. Musts in Italian Christmas celebrations are rich breads and cakes, the best known of which is *panettone*, a sweet risen bread loaded with nuts and candied fruits.

Like much of Latin America, Christmas is a huge event in **Mexico**. Actual celebrations begin on December 16 and carry through all the way to January 6. Traditional Christmas eve dinner is a sumptuous meal, featuring *bunuelos*, sweet fried fritters served with cinnamon syrup, and *tamales*, packets of meat or vegetables covered in cornmeal dough and steamed inside dried corn husks.

One claim to fame of the **Philippines** is the world's longest Christmas celebration, which starts on December 16



Chicken adobo, from the Philippines

and can run as far as the last week of January or first week of February. Main foods in a Filipino Christmas feast can include ham, *lumpia*, a kind of spring roll, sweet rice cakes, and dishes cooked *adobo*-style, meaning in a delicious vinegar-based sauce.



Sweets and Treats

Recipe

Christmas Cookies

Cookies are nearly as essential to the holidays as Santa, trees and presents. Making traditional cookies takes time, but can be fun for the whole family.

The only problem locally is getting cookie cutters. The truly crafty can fashion their own from heavy foil, but otherwise check Ikea for ready-made versions.

When decorating, use raisins, candies, colored frosting, sprinkles... whatever is on hand to jazz up your personalized treats.

The following recipes are good for around three dozen cookies each, depending on size of cookie cutters used.



Gingerbread Cookie Dough Ingredients

2 3/4 cups unbleached all purpose flour
1 teaspoon ground ginger
3/4 teaspoon baking soda
1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon
1/2 teaspoon ground cloves
1/4 cup solid vegetable shortening, room temperature
1/4 cup (1/2 stick) unsalted butter, room temperature
1/2 cup sugar
1/2 cup light molasses
1 large egg

Procedure

Combine flour, ginger, baking soda, cinnamon and cloves in a medium bowl, ideally sifting flour first. Whip shortening and butter in large bowl using electric mixer or in a food processor until light. Add sugar and continue mixing until fluffy. Beat in molasses, then egg. Add dry ingredients from other bowl. Stir the

mixture with a spoon until it forms a very soft dough.

Divide the dough into three equal parts. Form each part into a ball, and then flatten the balls into thick disks. Wrap each section in plastic wrap and refrigerate until firm, around four hours. Dough can be made up to two days before used, just keep it refrigerated.

Citrus sugar cookie dough

Ingredients

2 cups unbleached all purpose flour
1 1/2 teaspoons baking powder
1/4 teaspoon salt
3/4 cup (1 1/2 sticks) unsalted butter, room temperature
1 1/4 teaspoons grated lemon peel
1 1/4 grated tangerine peel or orange peel
1/2 cup sugar
1/4 cup powdered sugar
1 large egg

Procedure

Mix flour, baking powder and salt in a medium-sized bowl, ideally sifting flour first. Beat butter, lemon peel and tangerine peel in a large bowl with an electric mixer, or in a food processor, until light. Add the sugar and powdered sugar and mix until fluffy. Add the egg and mix. Add the dry ingredients from the medium-sized bowl. Stir the mixture with a spoon until it forms a soft dough. Beat butter, lemon peel and tangerine peel in large bowl until light. Add one half cup sugar and one quarter cup powdered sugar and beat until fluffy.



Many popular Christmas cookies have German origins.



Gingerbread cookies are fun to make and delicious to eat.

Beat in egg. Add dry ingredients. Using a spoon, stir until mixture forms a soft dough. Then follow the same steps for cooling and cutting as in previous recipe.

To shape and bake the cookies, work with one dough at a time. Preheat the oven to 350 degrees F. Flour the work surface and rolling pin, then put one disk on the surface and roll until around half a centimeter thick. Use cookie cutters dipped in flour to cut cookies and then lay them on greased baking pans, spaced one centimeter apart.



Some decorations, such as raisins and small nuts, can be baked onto the cookies. Others, such as frosting or springs, should be applied after baking.

Bake cookies for around 15 minutes, until edges turn brown. Remove from oven and let them stand one minute, then remove from the sheets and put out to cool completely.

Repeat process for rest of the dough. Put unused dough scraps together to form a disk and then roll out, cut and bake as above.

Store cooled cookies in airtight container at room temperature until ready to decorate.

Dining Out on and around Christmas Eve

By Wesley Leilee

Global Christmas Lunch Buffet

Mark the festive season with a buffet feast of Christmas dishes from across the world plus salad bar, Christmas cakes, cookies and puddings.

Where: Cafe Renaissance, Jingguang Center **When:** 11:30 am - 2 pm, December 22-25 **Tel:** 6597 8888 ext. 2138 **Cost:** 98 yuan plus 15 percent surcharge per person, (68 yuan plus 15 percent for children under 1.2 meters tall)

Feast, Drink, Dance and Party

For the holiday, Henry J. Beans is offering a three-course Christmas dinner with salad, turkey, stuffing, potatoes and vegetables, topped off by Christmas pudding with candied chestnuts and brandy butter sauce. Also a lucky draw and party gifts.

Where: First floor, West building of China World Trade Center **When:** 6-10 pm, December 24 **Tel:** 6505 2266 ext 6350 and 6351 **Cost:** 388 yuan per person (includes one standard drink)

Festive Goodies at The Patisserie

Austrian pastry chef Christoph Reinthaler has baked up a beautiful selection of premium holiday treats, from plum pudding and gingerbread to marzipan angels and Santas, handmade chocolate figures and the finest Christmas cakes and logs. Excellent wines, champagne, vintage port and elegant gift baskets also available.

Where: The Patisserie, Grand Hyatt Beijing **Tel:** 8518 1234 ext. 6362. Orders may be placed by fax at 6510 9210 and should be made at least 48 hours in advance.

Christmas Bash at Traders Hotel

Traders Cafe is hosting a fun holiday and year-end bash. Come make merry with a scrumptious buffet dinner with free flow of beer, soft drinks and wine, as well as great lucky draw prizes, sizzling entertainment and more!

Where: Traders Cafe and main lobby of Traders Hotel **When:** December 24 **Tel:** 6505 2277 ext. 35 **Cost:** 588 yuan to 1188 yuan per person.

Salsa-style Christmas Eve Dance Party

Salsa Cabana jazzes up the holidays with performances by resident band True Colors and a special three-course Christmas Eve set dinner, including free flow beer, wine and soft drinks, plus lots of exciting lucky draw prizes.

Where: Salsa Cabana, The Kempinski Hotel Beijing, Lufthansa Center **When:** December 24 **Tel:** 6465 3388 ext. 4075 or 4118 **Cost:** 888 yuan net per person

Buffet to Satisfy Any Taste

Dine at the Atrium, Sui Yuan or Genji for an evening of international food, wine, carols, presents, family and friends. The chefs will prepare two huge traditional Christmas buffets with unlimited selected wines, beer and soft drinks.

Where: Hilton Beijing **When:** 6 pm onwards, December 24 **Tel:** 6468 6699 ext. 1260 **Cost:** 588 yuan plus 15 percent surcharge per person

Selected Wines at Half Price

To celebrate the arrival of the festive season, Danieli's manager has selected a list of wines that will be sold at half price until Christmas day. Experience fine wines and authentic Italian cuisine this year at the restaurant's candlelight dinner with an extensive a la carte menu plus unique Christmas specials, soft music and a romantic atmosphere. All prices subject to 15 percent surcharge.

Where: Danieli's, the St. Regis Beijing **When:** December 24 **Tel:** 6460 6688 ext. 2440

Sensational Eve Event

This gala celebration will feature entertainment headlined by Phoenix TV's Liang Dong and including a full modern dance show, kung fu, tunes by the Pink Legends orchestra and Christmas caroling, plus an all-inclusive buffet, free flow soft drinks, beer and wine all night long, fun games, specially chosen door gifts and many lucky draw prizes.

Where: Grand Ballroom, the Kerry Centre Hotel **When:** 6:30 pm, December 24 **Tel:** 65618833 ext. 6220/6333 **Cost:** 1,388 yuan net per person

Gourmet Gala Dinner

The seven-course holiday feast begins with gratinated oysters, followed by goose liver terrine, wild mushroom consommé, main courses of lobster and halibut with parsley sauce, beef tenderloin and goose liver in filo pastry with juniper berry sauce, or turkey paupiettes served with truffled potato and gravy, ended by chestnut bava-rouse with traditional apple strudel.

Where: Justine's, Jianguo Hotel **When:** 6 pm, December 24 **Tel:** 6500 2233 ext. 8039 **Cost:** 1,280 yuan net per person, including free flow of imported wines, local soft drinks and beer

Time Spent Together

Come to the Sports City Cafe for a fine Christmas buffet with dishes from all over the world, including stuffed turkey, roast goose and Yule log cakes, plus a wide range of great lucky draw prizes. Diners get one complimentary glass of champagne and free flow soft drinks.

Where: Sports City Cafe, Gloria Plaza Hotel **When:** 7:30 pm onwards, December 24 **Tel:** 6515 8855 ext. 3187 **Cost:** 888 yuan per person

Big Buffet at Coffee Shop

Celebrate in style with sumptuous buffet spread, live entertainment with singing, dancing, a magic show, games and live music, plus exciting lucky draw prizes. Price includes a welcome cocktail, door gift, half bottle of red wine and free flow of local beer and soft drinks. Lucky draw prizes include a rear projection TV, laptop computer and travel package to Hainan.

Where: Coffee Shop, Novotel Xinqiao Beijing **When:** December 24 **Tel:** 6513 3366 ext. 2001 and 2002 **Cost:** 1,200 yuan net per adult, half price for children under 1.2 meters tall

Gourmet Gathering

Enjoy four levels of Asian-style Christmas set menus, priced from 238 yuan plus 10 percent surcharge up to 1,588 yuan plus 10 percent surcharge for a party of 10. Menus include turkey also with such tantalizing dishes as abalone, hot Thai soup with shark fin and Malaysian grilled suckling pig, along with salads, appetizers and deserts, plus a lucky draw.

Where: Asian Star, No. 26 North Dongsanhuan Lu **When:** December 24-25 **Tel:** 6582 5306



Part of the holiday spread at the Hilton Beijing Hotel.



SHOPPING 搜店



Everything Yule under One Roof

As of today, there are five shopping days until Christmas, meaning there is still plenty of time to get anything needed to decorate the home or office, give to friends or family or stuff a child's stocking. In the capital, many of the best and most convenient places to look for Christmas-y items are not huge shopping malls but wholesale markets. In their sprawling stalls, careful shoppers can find artificial trees and decorations, St. Nick figures and costumes, as well myriad kinds of small gifts, all at low, low wholesale prices. Just be ready to bargain.

Below are brief introductions to three of the best-known, most complete wholesale centers in the city, in Xicheng, Chongwen and Haidian Districts, and five domestic websites that offer online shopping for ornaments, cakes and great presents such as CDs, DVDs, and Chinese books. Happy shopping!



Wantong New World Market: Decorations Galore

By Dong Nan

When you need lots of Christmas decorations and you need them fast and cheap, the Wantong Xinshijie (Wantong New World Market) next to the Fuchengmen subway station is one of the best places to go.

Booth 2150 offers a range of artificial Christmas trees, including ones made with fiber-optic cables that give off shimmering, colorful light, negating the need for other decorations. Sizes vary from 60 centimeters to 2.1 meters tall, and prices start at 60 yuan and go up to 380 yuan. Basic plastic trees are much cheaper, just 6 yuan for a 0.6 meter tall model to 12 yuan for a full meter of fake fir.

This stall is also a good place to load up on tree decorations, in such festive shapes as snowmen, bells, stars, ribbons, gift boxes and pinecones – grab three or four for just 10 yuan. Larger decorations for hanging on doors or walls fetch 38 yuan to 45 yuan, and a range of Christmas stockings cost 10 yuan to 20 yuan per sock.

Other booths are more specialized. 2134 sells cans of spray “snow” (10 yuan for three) that shoot white, sticky, snow-like goo, while 2144 offers beautiful little golden angels made of thin sheets of silk (30 yuan). The angels at stall 2157-59 are made of foam and the white Christmas trees are crafted from cotton.

For dog owners who want their “best friends” to enjoy the holiday spirit, booth 2118 sells pooch-sized Santa outfits for 15 yuan to 28 yuan.

Santa Claus figurines of all kinds occupy booth 2096-2110, some that play music, some that sing songs, even some that glow. Prices generally range from 50 yuan to 300 yuan, though the largest, standing a full 1.8 meters tall, is tagged at 1,200 yuan.

Don't forget the Christmas cards! They are available in many styles at many stalls, such as 2074, 2092 and 2084, generally priced

around 2 yuan each, although bargaining can begin for purchases of 10 or more.

Where: Second Floor, Wantong Xinshijie, No. 2 Fuchengmen Waidajie, Xicheng
Open: 9 am - 6 pm

Tel: 6858 8145, 6858 8183



Hongqiao Tianle Toy Market: The Holiday Mother Lode

By Wang Xiaoxiao

Even if you have yet to deck the halls of your home or office with Christmas decorations, it is definitely not too late thanks to the many items on sale at the Hongqiao Tianle Toy Market across the street from the Temple of Heaven and next to the larger Hongqiao Market.

Anything you need for decorating Christmas-style, from the classic to the garish, is on offer. Stalls sell artificial trees in a wide variety of shapes, sizes and abilities, pinecone wreaths, plastic gold and silver bells, Santa Claus figures in poses and others that can move and dance, and beautiful big bows to add holiday feel to doors or windows.

A temporary Christmas market just opened at the southern side of the Hongqiao Tianle Toy Market is chock full of decorations and gifts for Christmas, New Year's and Spring Festival and will run until January 22. One of the market's strengths is its range of Christmas trees, standing 60 centimeters to a huge 4.5 meters tall, in natural green or snow white, some already decorated with colorful lights.

New items at this and other local holiday markets are cotton decorations called *mianshiqi*. They come shaped as spheres, angels or stars and covered in mohair, giving them an attractive sheen. Prices range from 35 to 180 yuan according to size and complexity.

Where: Second floor of Hongqiao Tianle Toy Market, 46 Tiantan Donglu, Chongwen
Open: 7 am - 8 pm

Jinwuxing Market: Novel Holiday Novelties

By Chen Si

In general, stalls in the Jinwuxing Market in Haidian sell similar items to those at the Wantong Xinshijie and other wholesale centers. A rare exception is shop No. 678, which carries the latest designs in Christmas presents and decorations.

One winning item is a music box topped with a decorated Christmas tree figurine. When switched on, the 68-yuan item can play music, the tree can light up, or both can happen at the same time. Another cute present is a little flashlight (only 1.5 yuan) in which the bulb is buried inside the body of a little wobbly plastic Santa Claus sitting atop a long, spring-bound pedestal.

The store's best-selling item is a soft cloth chain of five Santas holding hands (35 yuan). The St. Nicks in the delicate decoration are spruced up with gold thread and carefully sewn buttons, gloves, hats and shoes and are intended to be hung across a doorway or room.

Other cloth figures include “Dancing Santa”, little Father Christmases playing musical instruments and kicking as if doing the can-can, and the accurately named “Long-legged snowman” (do snowmen even have legs?). All fetch the low price of just 8 yuan each.

A popular item this year is a moon-shaped decoration made of foam (18 yuan) on which sits Santa with a broom in his hand and a Christmas tree and snow around him. The surface of the piece is lacquered silvery-white to make it look like fresh, shimmering

snow.

Where: Stall No. 678, Jinwuxing Department Store, Xueyuan Nanlu, Haidian

Open: 8:30 am - 6 pm
Tel: 13911025878



Online: Let Your Fingers Do the Shopping

By Yu Shanshan

1.Changyan.com

http://www.changyan.com/

This online flower store offers Christmas flowers (89 yuan to 399 yuan), Christmas trees (110 yuan to 688 yuan) and small gifts such as teddy bears, Santa dolls, garlands, socks and fruit and wine baskets, all available for delivery.

2.My8848.com

http://www.my8848.com/

Nearly anything Christmas-y imagine is available, from Santa toys (89 yuan to 288 yuan) and Christmas hats (10 yuan) to cakes (178 yuan to 258 yuan), mini Christmas trees, underwear bearing patterns of Christmas stockings (158 yuan for a black and red duo) and pet houses shaped like Christmas hats (109 yuan).

3.Eachnet.com

http://pages.eachnet.com /st/page/action/xmashome/page1.htm

This online auctioning platform is a perfect place to track down good-quality, low-price gifts for her, such as chocolate, crystal or flowers, him, including Zippo lighters and booze, and for children and parents.

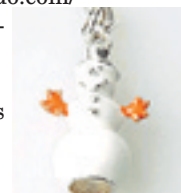
4.Dangdang.com

This well-known domestic online bookstore carries a huge array of books, CDs, VCDs and DVDs related, and not related to Christmas. The section at http://www.dangdang.com/static/03_Christmas-day_key.html offers some recommended holiday gifts based on people's zodiac signs.

5.Eguo.com

http://www.eguo.com/

Another catch-all site, peddling pendants, cell phone accessories and pins with holiday themes (38 yuan to 58 yuan), Santa clothes (45 yuan), mini Christmas trees and decorations.



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SPOTLIGHT 爆棚

Yu Guanyin Opens on Christmas Eve

By Dong Nan

Yu (jade) Guanyin, directed by Ann Hui, will sweep cinemas across the nation on Christmas Eve as Fangchengcheng Movie and TV Culture Corporation decided to move forward its release in response to the success of Feng Xiaogang's *Shouji (Cell Phone)*. This is good news for moviegoers who have been waiting for this expected hit since the movie began filming in April of this year.

The film narrates a tragic love triangle between An Xin (Vicky Zhao), a beautiful but unsophisticated policewoman, Mao Jie (Nicholas Tse), a handsome drug dealer and Yang Rui (Liu Yunlong), a cynical but kind white-collar professional.

Based on renowned pop novelist Hai Yan's work with the same name, this story explores the conflicts between emotions, self-sacrifice and responsibility. Many of Hai's love stories, such as *Yongbu Mingmu (Never Die)* and *Na Shenme Zhengjiu Ni, Wo de Airen (How Can I Save You, My Lover)* have been adapted into TV soap operas. The



Vicky Zhao and Nicholas Tse in Yu Guanyin

TV version of *Yu Guanyin* screened in June this year. Despite the unavoidable comparisons with the TV version, the movie's all-star cast is expected to bring in high box office sales.

"I almost couldn't believe that she is me," said Vicky Zhao at a preview press conference held last week in Yunnan, "I'm sure now that Yu Guanyin is my most unique work. I hope moviegoers will take me as An Xin instead

of Vicky Zhao." Hong Kong teen idol and singer turned actor Nicolas Tse performs the theme song for *Yu Guanyin*.

Where: Cinemas around the town **When:** Opening December 24

Love Story in the Animal Kingdom

By Nebula

After 28 successful performances in Australia, the dance opera *Wild Zebra* returns to Beijing for three special holiday performances.



Hailed as the *Romeo and Juliet* of the wild animal world, *Wild Zebra* tells a beautiful yet tragic story of a mother bear who selfishly desires to wear a new coat of wild zebra skin. She believes such a coat will enable her to live a long life without pain. When she finally succeeds in capturing a wild zebra, a virtuous female zebra sets the wild zebra free and the two fall in love without considering the consequences.

Created in 1997, *Wild Zebra* is an innovative dance spectacle integrating classical and contemporary ballet with modern folk dance. The top talent which came together to form the production team includes internationally renowned director and writer Zhang Jigang, composer Zhang Qianyi (best known for writing the hugely popular Chinese song *Qingzang Gaoyuan* or *Tibetan Plateau*).

Wild Zebra will give 100 performances in Europe in the first half of 2004 and another 100 performances in America in the second part of next year after completing its Beijing appearance.

Where: Beijing Exhibition Theater, 135 Xizhimenwai Dajie, Xicheng District **When:** December 24 - 25 7:30 pm **Admission:** 80 - 800 yuan **Tel:** 6835 4455

Navy Musical Celebrates Christmas

By Nebula

Chidao Yu (Rain on the Equator), a musical produced by the Chinese Naval Songs and Dance Troupe and the Chinese Naval Political TV Arts Center opens at Christmastime after 3 years of preparation.



The musical is set during a global voyage of a Chinese naval fleet at the end of the last century. It tells of a love story between Pan Tianyu (Lu Jihong), Captain of the destroyer *The Great Wall*, and Xiao Keyue (Song Zuying), a Chinese American journalist.

As the navy travels to distant lands, the evening presents a diverse menu of musical genres including: Russian seamen ensembles, waltz receptions, African drum rhythms, Hawaiian hula, American step dances and of course, arias of the hero and heroine in Chinese style.

Renowned soprano Song Zuying, recently returned from her Vienna solo concert last month, is most well-known for her sweet folk songs. Despite this being her first time to play the lead in a musical as well as dance, her acting is astonishingly good.

Where: Tianqiao Theater, 30 Beiwei Lu, Xuanwu District **When:** December 24 - 25, 7:25 pm **Admission:** 180 - 1280 yuan **Tel:** 8315 6170

Karen Mok's Solo Concert



Karen Mok at press conference, December 2

By Dong Nan

Chinese Hong Kong superstar Karen Mok opens her solo concert on Boxing Day, the first concert in Beijing for this versatile singer which will kick off a national tour. Loved by her fans not only for her figure but also her voice and multiple talents (she speaks five languages and plays three musical instruments), Mok says that her charm and attraction all come from self-confidence.

"I perform both jazz and traditional dance in the concert," Mok said in her December 2 press conference, adding, "As it is too common for a singer to accompany herself on piano, I will play electronic *Zheng* instead." For her latest hit *Danrenfang, Shuangrenchuang (Single Room, Double Bed)*, Mok will be performing on a huge bed on stage.

When asked of the potential conflict with Han Hong's solo concert just two days before hers, Mok replied "I wish there were more concerts around these days, then it would be even more interesting." After her China tour, Mok plans to portray Zhang Ailing, a renowned and legendary Chinese novelist in the last century, in a drama with the same name.

Where: Capital Gymnasium **When:** December 26, 7:30 pm **Admission:** 80 - 1000 yuan **Tel:** 6331 1500

Han Hong Celebrates a Red Christmas Eve

By Dong Nan

Renowned Chinese mainland pop singer Han Hong opens her first solo concert on Christmas Eve at the Capital Gymnasium. Playing on Han's first name, which literally means the color red, concert marketing has emphasized the color. "Take your red cloth to participate in the concert and enjoy Han Hong's High E," reads one of them.

Han plans to sing 30+ songs; playing the piano, guitar and drums herself. "I will exert my utmost effort to give audiences the best concert," she said at a December 2 press conference. "Though my costumes and stage design might not be as flashy as the others, audiences will know this is a real concert through my music," Han added.

Han has arduously prepared for the concert, giving up drinking to keep her voice in shape. Born in Tibet Autonomic District, many of Han's most popular songs concern Tibet and the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau: *Xueyu Guangmang (Light in Snow Land)*, *Jiangxiang (Homeland)* and *Tianya (Skyline)*. Her latest album *Hong (Red)* was released at the end of October this year.



Han Hong at press conference, December 2

Where: Capital Gymnasium **When:** December 24, 7:30 pm **Admission:** 120 - 680 yuan **Tel:** 6851 1556

Parties and Activities

By Dong Nan

2003 Christmas Eve Party

Something is wrong with Santa Claus's costume this year. How will he bring us gifts without the costume? The answer will be known on Christmas Eve. Join the Christmas Eve Party hosted by Tianlun Xingming Lake Resort to have a unique holiday experience. Models from Silk Road, TV and movie stars and sinners all rub elbows. Ample food, lucky draw and fireworks round out the evening.

Where: Lobby of Tianlun Xingming Lake Resort **When:** December 24, 7pm **Admission:** 1088 yuan per person, 1688 yuan per couple **Tel:** 6327 1443



Red Forever

A passionate night of arts features: contemporary dance by Extreme Dimension Contemporary Dance Troupe, live show of body artists Red, dance music with Swedish DJ De Rekum Trio, rock and jazz music live by the band Meihao Yaodian (Fine Drug Store), and a DV art exhibit. Here is the place for an "alternative" Christmas Eve!

Where: 798 Space, Dashanzi Art District, No.4 Jiuxianqiao Lu **When:** December 24, 9pm **Admission:** 80 yuan **Tel:** 6437 6248



Rock You All Night Long

Get Lucky hosts a Christmas Eve of heavy music featuring: Yecha (Yaksa), Tongku de Xinyang (Painful Religion), Zhanfu (Hatchet), Bingyong (Sick Worm) and AK- 47. Punk holds court the next day featuring Naozuo (Brain Failure) and Fanguangjing (Reflector).

Where: Get Lucky, 500m east of the south gate of the University of International Business and Economics, Chaoyang District **When:** December 24, 8:30pm **Admission:** 50 yuan **Tel:** 6429 9109



Classic Christmas Music and Movie Review

By Dong Nan

For those planning to spend a quiet Christmas Eve at home, it might be a good idea to find those classic CD's and DVD's about Christmas. Enjoy a nostalgic evening at home with family.

"And so this is Christmas
I hope you have fun
The near and dear one
The old and young"
— John Lennon *Happy Christmas*

Music

Bing Crosby / *White Christmas*

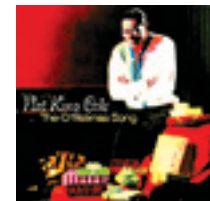
Bing Crosby was the most popular and influential media star of the first half of the 20th century. A best-selling artist well into the rock era, Bing was also the most popular radio star in all time and the biggest box-office draw of the 1940s. *White Christmas* premiered on his NBC radio show, the Kraft Music Hall, on December 25, 1941. While no complete broadcast of this transmission survived the war, one low-quality aircheck (recorded from a radio) has survived of Bing's first rendition of *White Christmas*. Bing recorded the song for Decca on May 29, 1942, with the John Scott Trotter Orchestra.

The Beach Boys / *Christmas Album*

What more can you say about this all-time classic from this renowned band of 1960s? A million-seller from 1964, it features *Little Saint Nick* and *Man with All the Toys*.

Nat King Cole / *The Christmas Songs*

Nat King Cole could not record a bad Christmas had he set out to do so. Known for his recording of *The Christmas Song*, Cole sings every other Christmas song just as well as he does that classic. Particularly good are *Cradle in Bethlehem* with outstanding choral support, *O Little Town of Bethlehem*, and *O Tannenbaum*. It's really striking how good it is and how well it has withstood the test of time. He had a voice made for Christmas.



Movie

The Nightmare Before Christmas

Jack Skellington, the pumpkin king of Halloween Town, is bored doing the same thing every year for Halloween. One day he stumbles into Christmas Town, and is so taken with the idea of Christmas that he tries to enlist the resident bats, ghouls, and goblins of Halloween town to help him put on Christmas instead of Halloween.

This stop-motion animated fable was a big hit when it was first released, not only at the box-office but critically as well. It was praised for its stunning originality and excellent execution while being a completely absorbing fable which both grownups and children can enjoy, so long as the children can handle the scary bits.



Christmas Vacation

It's Christmas time and the Griswolds are preparing for a family seasonal celebration, but things never run smoothly for Clark, his wife Ellen and their two kids. Clark's continual bad luck is worsened by his obnoxious family guests, but he manages to keep going by focusing on his soon-to-be-paid Christmas bonus...



How the Grinch Stole Christmas

Based Dr. Seuss' book by the same name, this movie tells of Whoville — a magical land existing inside a snowflake. The Who's, a munchkinlike sort of people, inhabit Whoville and they all love Christmas. In the mountains just outside of their beloved Whoville lives the Grinch. A nasty creature who hates Christmas, he plots to steal Christmas from the Who's (whom he equally abhors). Yet a small child, Cindy Lou Who, decides to try and befriend the Grinch. Jim Carrey stars in this live-action adaptation of a classic children's story.





PLAN 方案

Ski

Resorts

Beijing
Badaling
Skiing Field

About 2 kilometers west of the Badaling section of the Great Wall, this 300 million yuan ski destination fills an area of 3 million square meters. In addition to Beijing's longest snow roadway for motorcycles at 2,300 meters, the resort also features: two 800-meter long primary slopes, two 600-meter long secondary slopes, two advanced slopes (one with a 120-meter fall) plus two 300-meter long roadways for sliding "carts". Additional entertainment includes: dog sledding, bungee, snow sauna, ice sculpture and crossing the glacial lake. An 180,000 square meter snow making area combines with an 8,000 square meter service center to provide accommodation, restaurants, shops and gym. The all imported-facilities come with professional coaches and a big daily reception capacity of 10,000 visitors.
Tel: 010-6501 0330/1
Website: www.bdlskiing.com
Where: Take No. 18 exit Badaling from Jingchang Express Way (or the Badaling Express Way), turn left at the parking lot, then straight west for 3 kilometers.

Lianhuashan
Ski Resort
(Lotus Ski
Resort)

Boasting one of Beijing's first natural food restaurants, the Lianhuashan Ski Resort lies just 30 kilometers from the Capital Airport. The 800,000 square meter Canadian-designed resort features two primary slopes, three secondary ones plus two advanced-skier-only slopes and a motorcycle slideway. Imported ski gear features such well-known brands as Walker and Fischer. The mega-parking plot of 6,000 square meters is barely noticeable amidst the thoroughly landscaped resort featuring hills, waterfalls, trees and flowers.
Tel: 010- 8202 9982/3, 6148 8777
Website: www.lhski.com
Where: Zhan Town, Shunyi District (an hour's drive from Dongzhimen).

Jundushan
Ski Resort

One of the closest ski resorts to Beijing, Jundushan Ski Resort lies just five kilometers north of the famous Xiaotangshan Spa Resort. With a first-phase investment of 30 million yuan, the resort features: a 140,000 square meter snow-producing area, service facilities covering 5,100 square meters and seven slopes. Their beginner and intermediate level slopes are among the best in Northern China. The resort also offers reindeer-driven sledges, bobsleighs and snowboarding. With over 30 professional trainers, the resort has a daily reception capacity of 10,000 visitors. Apres-ski, visitors can enjoy the various amenities of Asia's largest indoor swimming and spa center with over 20 types of spas and private rooms.
Tel: 010-6072 5888
Website: www.bjski.com.cn
Where: five kilometers away from Dongguan Annular (Changping District), 34 kilometers from downtown Beijing.

Beijing Snow
World Ski
Resort

Near the Ming Tombs, this resort features pleasing scenery and a host of value-added services. With all US-imported facilities, this resort opens 270 days for a year. Beginner/intermediate slopes and sledding open later this month. Visitors can also make snowmen, have snowball fights and even try their hand at snow carving. Night skiing is uniquely available, with firecrackers available for evening festivities.
Tel: 010-8976 1886, 8976 1899
Website: www.xsjski.com
Where: Xiaogongmei, Shisanling Town, Changping District

Hebei Saibei
Ski Resort

One of first to open this season, this resort features all natural snow. Activities are on offer for the less active: snow viewing, forest hiking and walks. Slopes are available for all levels of skiers. A range of villas and a grand hotel accommodate 500 overnights plus food and drink for 350. The Hebei Tourism Bureau holds skiing festivals and contests here every winter.
Tel: 010-6711 2847, 6712 9785
Website: www.saibeiski.com
Where: 268 kilometers from Beijing. Take the Badaling Expressway through Zhangjiachou City, Hebei Province - the resort is about 20 kilometers further on. A shuttle bus runs from Longtan Lake and Beijing Amusement Park, through Madianqiao.

Heilongjiang
Yabuli Ski
Center

The biggest international ski resort in China, this ski center has already hosted several international skiing competitions. Since 1998, the annual China International Ski Festival has been held here (with this year's festival from December 19 to January 4, 2004). Eleven slopes cater to all levels, one of which is the longest in Asia at 30 kilometers. Six windmills villas hosted athletes of the 3rd Asian Winter Games, and are now open to the public as well as a three-star hotel and a Youth Hostel. Six restaurants offer Northeast Chinese and Sichuan cuisine to western fast food.
Tel: 0451- 5345 5091, 5345 5126
Where: Yabuli Town, Harbin, Heilongjiang Province (195 kilometers east of Harbin City).

By Shan Jinliang

Church Services

Beijing East Cathedral

All visitors are welcome to the Church of St. Joseph (or Beijing East Cathedral) for the holidays before 8 am, with limited seating for Christmas Mass.
Where: No. 74, Wangfujing Street, Dongcheng District (close to Wangfujing subway station)
Tel: 010-6524 0634

Beijing South Cathedral

St. Mary of Immaculate Conception Cathedral (or Beijing South Cathedral) will hold Christmas Eve Mass. All

visitors are welcome to morning prayer on feast days, including Christmas day, on a first come first serve basis.

Where: No. 141 Qianmen West Dajie (near the north-east exit of Xuanwumen subway station)
Tel: 010-6602 5221, 6606 8969

Beijing North Cathedral

The grand Pehtang Cathedral (or Beijing North Cathedral) will offer Midnight Mass on Christmas Eve with limited

seating. For all other services and throughout the day, all visitors are welcome.

Where: West of Beihai Park (bus No. 109, No. 103 and No. 55 all stop near the Cathedral)
Tel: 010-66175198

Chongwenmen Ashey
Church

All visitors are welcome to Christmas Eve and Christmas morning services, though reserving seats in advance is not permitted.

Where: No. Ding 2 Hougou

Hutong, Chongwenmennei Dajie (from the north exit of Chongwenmen subway stop, the church lies halfway along the way to the Beijing Railway station)
Tel: 010-65242193

Haidian Protestant Church

The Christmas Eve service will begin at 6 pm with a half hour service for children only, followed by the main service. Christmas Day service will be held from 7:30 to 9 pm.

Where: No. 10, Xieshuihu,

Haidian District
Tel: 010-62572902

Zhushikou Protestant Church

Christmas Eve service begins at 7 pm, with Christmas Day service starting at 9 am. All visitors are welcome.

Where: No. 12, Qianmen Dajie, Xuanwu District. (No. 22 bus to Qianmen, head south, the church can be found on the southwest corner of the first intersection)
Tel: 010-63016678

By Feng Yani

Spa
Retreats

Jiuhua Spa and Resort: Mud Spa

One of China's top 10 spas, Jiuhua is famous for its Xiaotangshan Spa whose outdoor and mud spas have drawn many visitors from Japan and South Korea. Formerly a royal retreat, Jinhua features ample facilities and beautiful scenery.

At a toasty 38 to 42 degrees, the mud is said to cure back and leg pains as well as improve skin tone and condition. Visitors usually enjoy the spas in 20 minute intervals, interspersed with tea breaks and lounging. Also on offer are: check-up service, health food, sports center and a digital movie theater.

Where: 20 minutes by car from Yayuncun to the north along Beiyuan Road (or 15 minutes from the Olympic Village). Jiuhua Spa is just after Tiantongyuan, Taiyangcheng, 100 meters west of Daliushu

Prices: 60 yuan per person for a spa and medical bath, 500-680 yuan for Fenglu Spa (for 4 to 6 people) and 60 yuan for mud spa per person
Tel: 010-61782288

Chunhuiyuan Spa and Holiday Village: Day Trip

A good choice for day trippers, this spa charges by three hour blocks. Offering private rooms with two wooden bath tubs, the spa offers varieties of herbal medicines to mix into the hot water. Choices include improving skin tone, enhancing tranquility and detoxifying the body.

Other services on offer include: KTV, beauty salon and sports center.

Where: From Siyuanqiao, drive about 45 minutes to get to Yu Village, Gaoliying, Shunyi District
Prices: 480 yuan for three hours excluding the 98 yuan admission fee
Tel: 010-6551 5566

Nangong Spa: Children's Paradise

Touted as the Hawaii of Beijing west, Nangong Spa is a large aquatic amusement park with standard, wave, wading and paddle pools. Three hot spring pools and a public sauna room with massage service round out the facilities. Slides and other fun areas make it ideal for children.

Where: Enter Jingshi Expressway from Liuliqiao and exit at Zhaoxindian, then follow the signs for Nangong Spa

Prices: 38 yuan per person for 10:30 am to 7:00 pm Monday to Friday, 48 yuan on weekends
Tel: 010-8331 5565

Huaqing Spa Hotel: City's Largest

The 1000-square-meter spa area at Huaqing includes wood panelled rooms, waterfalls and a bridge. The special spa solution features six treatment pools for aromatic and herbal bathing. A hot stone near the entrance is said to benefit the back after laying on it. Also on offer are: gymnasium, KTV and ballroom.

Where: Drive on Anli Lu along North Fourth Ring Road, 100 meters left to the subway station line No. 13 in Lishuiqiao, Chaoyang District

Prices: 68 yuan per person includes spa, swimming, self-serve buffet meal. Open from 9 am to 2 am.

Tel: 010-8482 6665

Tulip Spa Garden (Yujinxiang Spa Garden): Romantic Getaway

Getting its name from its former function as flower garden for the capital, today the Tulip Spa Garden features a courtyard pool surrounded by a park. Warmed to 65 degrees, the pools are small and exquisite making them perfect for couples to enjoy. Open 24 hours, this resort also offers special overnight rates.

Where: Driving from airport expressway, go 1 kilometer south to Weigou exit, Chaoyang District
Prices: 300 yuan per person for three hours. 480 yuan to overnight on weekdays, 560 yuan to overnight on Saturday and Sunday
Tel: 010-8432 7801, 8432 7816

By Ji Runju